

IRELAND TO-DAY

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NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ERIC GILL, A.R.A., *English sculptor of note, consistent opponent of the capitalist control in society. His latest book, Work and Property, just published, will be reviewed in our pages next month.*

PADRAIC COLUM, *poet, playwright, and essayist, whose work figures largely in the history of our literary revival.*

BRADLEY MCCALL, *of Queen's University, Belfast, attended School of International Studies at Geneva, 1936; at present reading for the Bar. The influence of Sir Alfred Zimmern is faintly discernible in the present valued contribution.*

P. A. USSHER, *a young Waterford man, author of a brilliant translation of Cúirt an Mheadhón Oidhche, published in 1925; here is a fragment from a collection which has received the highest praise from both scholars and literary men.*

DR. JAMES DEVANE, *the Dublin dermatologist is here, as always, concerned with the cultural texture of life in Ireland.*

DANIEL CORKERY, *novelist, playwright and essayist; author of The Threshold of Quiet, The Hidden Ireland, Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature.*

W. WEAVER *is the pen-name of a young Tyrone man; edits research work for Irish Historical MSS. Commission; has published original work on Gaelic Literature; has had play and stories broadcast from 2R.N.; M.A., N.U.I.*

NIAL SHERRIDAN, M.A., *of the National University, gives his views in a contribution which is half in jest and wholly in earnest.*

The regular features are conducted by the Editors of the several sections:

Foreign Commentary	..	MICHAEL O'NEILL-KING.
Art	..	JOHN DOWLING, B.A., B.D.S.
Music	..	EAMONN Ó GALLCHOBHAI.
Theatre	..	SEÁN Ó MEÁDHRA, B.A.
Film	..	LIAM Ó LAOGHAIRE.
Books	..	EDWARD SHEEHY, M.A.

EDITORIAL

THE most far-reaching event of the past month in this country has undoubtedly been the long deferred publication of the draft Constitution, which, if it falls short of the expectations of some who expected visible and immediate changes to be wrought literally by a sweep of the pen, does clarify matters in one important regard—it shows just how far towards their declared goal of separation and independence for all Ireland the present Government of the Twenty-Six Counties is prepared to go. That this distance is not very great is a possibility which it would seem to be one of the objects of this Constitution to conceal. Otherwise why a Constitution *now*, except as a much more comprehensive amendment than the previous twenty-seven?

We write before the document has received legislative consideration, but it is almost certain that its passage will be steered noisily on party lines, and, indeed, without some big, resurgent, unifying event to trumpet its arrival, there is no justification for introducing anything like a *permanent* Constitution into our still divided camps. No such event is to hand; no great wave of national enthusiasm. But an election is to hand, and the electorate has been steadily becoming more and more befogged or indifferent on the vital issues that face the country. The publication of the Constitution will undoubtedly influence the result of the election, and it will with equal certainty effect very little change in the lives of the electorate, at a time when so much more might have been achieved.

This said, justice demands a little more. The dedication as preamble and the aspiration at the end of the document are stately and moving and, whilst they are not part of the Constitution, we accept them as sincerely meant. We hope that the sentiments they embody will not be ruled out as non-cognisable in the Courts. Again, we like the dignified manner in which the whole land annuities question is, by implication, finally buried, obligations not ratified being repudiated. The restoration of the Referendum, too, is good; although the simple majority of an unspecified number of voters, in the case of amendments to the Constitution only, is objectionable. Also, the permanent enthronelement of the principle of proportional representation is a gesture of strength, confidence and fairness which we hold worth while even though greater instability is the price to be paid and even though we have a feeling that

certain people approve of this principle because *they* are in the minority and would have none of it were the position reversed. Another good feature of the Constitution is the final removal of all reference to the Treaty or to repugnancy to it as spelling invalidity. But we are not so sure that one of the points long claimed in its favour, namely, that the Constitution could apply to a Republic without the alteration of a comma, bears such a favourable interpretation. If our present status is unfree and restricted, as it is, there must be something peculiarly unsatisfying about a Constitution which is equally applicable to our present estate and that idyllic one which the word Republic used to conjure in our minds.

And so, our suspicions once more aroused, we begin at the beginning, determined to see the light even though the reflective surfaces have all been blackened and the air is filled with smoke. And from the very first page, difficulties assail us. For there, no less than four entities are mentioned—"the Irish nation," "Ireland," "Saorstát Éireann," and "Éire." Not those who drafted the Constitution, nor the legislature that proposes to enact it, can speak for "the Irish nation." More Irish-born people are actually alive *outside* the Twenty-six Counties, over which alone the present Government claims competence, than within. Article 2, declaring that "The national territory consists of the whole of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas," is simply a statement of geographical fact, to which the Six Counties and England would readily subscribe. Article 3 rudely brings one back to reality, confessing that "pending the re-integration of the national territory," things as they are, are not what they should be. The fourth clause can only be described as an evasion—"The name of the State is Éire"—for it is not related to any of the three previously-mentioned entities, nor is it defined in any way.

And considering for a moment the whole question of competency, we wonder by what succession of authority the desired sacredness of such a charter is to be attained. The authority vested in the present Government is no more, and no less, than that vested in their predecessors in office. That authority emerged from British law and British enactments only and was implemented in arms with British connivance, by what has quite recently been described by the head of the present Twenty-six County Government as a *coup d'état* against the then legitimate Irish Republican Government. In this historical tangle it is

hard to see where authority resides unless fundamentals are set forth clearly, not concealed. Yet the present draft Constitution demands of us "loyalty to the State," although the only two sources from which, with any semblance of legality, the present legislature could claim to derive its powers—the relevant British laws and the undissolved Republican Dáil—are both repudiated and disowned by those who compiled it. Hence we are driven to the conclusion that just as fifteen years ago *force majeure* conferred whatever legitimacy there was, so now against legitimist aspirations, unbacked by force, authority is in the saddle and England, though enjoying a more chastened victory than before, nevertheless, feels that with Partition still effective, the Treaty still unrepudiated and the Crown intact (though somewhat squashed between the lines) she might, when all is said and done, have been very much worse off. She certainly might have fared less well : her Commonwealth is still intact.

There are many imperfections in the Draft. Needless detail, thoroughly extraneous to the requirements of a Constitution, frequently intrudes. Verbiage more suited to the language of a party manifesto is common. Worse still, a vicarious respect is won for the document by mixing in otherwise very laudable religious sentiments, which will in no way be enacted, by invoking high social principles which are admitted to be only a pious guide and quite non-cognisable, and lastly, behind a thinly-veiled screen, by holding out the well-tried baits of majority rule and will of the people (*Le guth an phobail féin*—the real, authentic *voice* is in only the Irish text). The outlines of social justice are all to the good and genuinely reflect the trends in practice of the present Government, but fear of being branded with the communism of the Encyclicals (as opposed to the "atheistic communism" which so much befuddles the public mind) seems to lurk round the corner. The provisions that favour private enterprise and place a too narrow interpretation on "private property" certainly seem to out-conservative the conservatives, and will scarcely bring solace even to churchmen with any pretensions to far-sightedness. Can the exhortation to all electors carefully to read this 57-page document be fully sincere? Is it not a document which will puzzle lawyers and administrators? Then why accept a verdict from the people as conferring or withholding approval when manifestly it will be beyond the competence of the majority to form an opinion that will be their own. It may not be unfair,

in politics, to get such a paper verdict in favour of a document, but it *would* be unfair subsequently to claim, because a majority of *voters* answered "Yes" to the question "Do you approve of this 57-page document?"—the only permitted alternative reply being the monosyllable "No"—that any and every section represented the people's expressed will. The subject of a referendum, to be a genuine reflex of the people's will, should be a simply-worded issue such as "Do you desire to see the partition of your country ended?" Yes or No. Where there cannot be a technical competency the issue should be simple, capable of an almost instinctive decision. Otherwise to a long involved document, the response is invalid.

In a few Articles liberty is handed out in generous measure, only to be meanly retracted in qualifying clauses. This tendency becomes outrageous and not to be borne when all the worst features of the suspension of the ordinary laws, military tribunals, and special powers legislation are solemnly and seriously enshrined in this document by the very people who denounced the mere invoking of these powers by their predecessors at a time of stress and chronic unrest.

At the outset, it was not intended to devote the full space of these comments to the above considerations, but as we are deferring the publication of articles by distinguished publicists on the Constitution and questions of Anglo-Irish relations generally, until our next issue, the temptation was irresistible. No doubt, such points as the following, which we regard as highly important, will then come in for due consideration:—The relative importance of the two leading posts and the laying of the "dictator" ghost; the position of women; the feeble delaying powers of a mildly conservative Senate; the empty futility of the Council of State; the provision under certain circumstances for two lawyers to assume all Presidential powers, including those over life and death, and the reaction of this position caused by the heritage of an alien jurisprudence; the harmful mingling of the judiciary with executive political control; the collapse of all claim to be neutral in time of war, unless positive severance from the British Empire is effected; and, lastly, but by no means the least important, reunion with our North-eastern Six Counties, which if not impeded by several features of this draft Constitution is, at any rate, not appreciably advanced by it.

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

A RAPPROCHEMENT between England and Japan seems now a not at all unlikely development. Ever since the Manchurian episode in 1932, when England, in effect, backed Japan, relations between the two countries have tended to deteriorate. The reason lies in what has been described in the recent developments as "the third party," China, which, for over a generation, has been the favourite subject for dissection among the Powers great at any particular period and whose last division was good for over a decade since the Washington Treaty of 1922. Japan's designs on China, while on paper they were never small, seemed to expand as they took on some substance by her conquest of Manchuria; and their complete attainment would inevitably involve a great diminution of the influence of both Great Britain and the U.S.A., whose interests, on the other hand, while originally competitive naturally against a third power, were more like to coincide; but, at the same time, would not on most individual points be identical. Great Britain's aliveness to the Japanese danger in China was manifested by the visit paid to China last year to carry out a financial and commercial investigation by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross. While an eventual rapprochement will represent some concession on both sides, it seems very probable that that on the Japanese part will be greater than on Great Britain's.

In February last things came to a head in Japan, when the Diet refused to pass the budget as first prepared, the result being the resignation of Mr. Hirota's Government, which was followed at short intervals by a number of unstable cabinets. The original budget was characterised by an apportionment to military expenditure of the greatest amount yet set aside by Japan for that purpose, and that though the financial condition of Japan in general and the provision for social services in particular would demand the raising of a smaller revenue and a different appropriation for whatever sum would be raised. In Japan, however, the battalions themselves are power and the amended budget eventually passed did not allot a much lesser sum to their upkeep. However, it may be taken that on her present economy the limit of Japanese military expenditure has been reached and relatively to the expenditure on the same line by other military nations, that limit now is very far

down the scale. Consequently, as defence alone, in the conditions likely to prevail for some years to come, would easily absorb an even greater sum, a restriction of her offensive policy is for Japan a necessity. The result is to make her more amenable to any arrangement which, while involving a toning down of her foreign (Chinese) policy, would, at the same time, not fail to save her face; and Great Britain, as one of the major forces in the Pacific is, apart from the dictates of her own policy, one of the few Powers with whom an arrangement would secure the latter part of the condition. Another motive urging Japan in the direction of an understanding with England is the influence of Germany, her anti-Soviet ally of eight months' standing, whose policy has, for some time past, and in spite of her colonial revisionism, as one of its larger objectives, the attainment of friendly relations with England. The extent to which the recent election has contributed to Japan's *volte face* is not great as the most conspicuous result of the event, namely, a 100 per cent. increase in the number of the representatives of the popular party, is of potential rather than immediate significance.

* * *

Italy has in the past month been the centre of much activity, all directed to consolidating her position in the Balkans as far as possible while maintaining a good understanding with Germany. The agreement of the earlier part of the year with the latter is wearing well, nourished to a large extent by their common interest for the outcome of the Spanish conflict. It may be that the rather pointed reference in the Italian Foreign Minister's speech at one of the full dress meetings of Parliament to Italy's friendly interest in Poland is a reflection of German influence on Italian policy. Poland's position in Europe is a curious one, and would be best secured by a nice balance between the opposing forces on either side of her. The hostility of Germany to Russia is to that extent Poland's safeguard; but a safeguard likely to be weakened by an undue preponderance of either of these powers over the other. Hitherto Italy, although quite anti-Bolshevist, has not participated much in any crusade against the U.S.S.R. A friendly understanding, however, between her and Poland, which in the ideas directing its internal constitution more nearly approximate to the Italian than the Russian form would, if well founded, much alleviate the anxiety felt for her frontier on that side of Germany, between whom and Poland there are more points of contention than of alliance.

The most spectacular development in the international field was the withdrawal by Italy of all her correspondents from London for the week of the Coronation. The reasons for that action are difficult to find; but are, there can be no doubt, very strongly bound up with Italian reminiscence of England's behaviour during the Abyssinian War, whose effects are very far from being played out. The enmity felt by English statesmen for the Italian enterprise rested on deep, lasting and quite material foundations as the difference in régime in the two countries only emphasises the extent to which Italy is the chief menace to England in the Mediterranean, through the possession of the twelve Greek islands and the natural factor of her being the only exclusively Mediterranean large naval power. Her emergence as such has changed the whole face of English policy in Europe; as an apparently great, but, in fact, harmless, Italy was a considerable moral support for any European policy on which general agreement between England and France could be found. Most agreements of that nature in the past fifteen years have had very little real binding force, at least in so far as concerns an Italy which did not consider that the threat by Germany in 1934 to Austria, whose independence, more or less, guaranteed by every state of any size in Europe, called automatically for protracted discussions as to the line to follow which would most effectively succeed in wasting time. Hitherto what Italy has most lacked is prestige among European states; and the acquisition of that is no small part of the objective towards which her rather feverish diplomatic activity is being directed. King Victor Emmanuel's visit to Hungary, one of the states that have long since recognised his title to the name of Emperor, although but a return visit for that of the Hungarian regent to Italy last year, has, nevertheless, followed upon it so closely as to carry a greater significance than that of mere courtesy; but the difficulties alluded to here last month reconciling Italian championship of Hungarian revisionist claims with friendship with the other near Balkan friends of recent acquisition, still remains.

* * *

The disunion among the Government adherents in Spain reached a climax in the past month when, on the one hand, an Anarchist revolt took place in Catalonia that has not yet quite spent its force and, on the other, the Government itself was changed, power going into the hands of a radical professor, to the complete exclusion of Caballero from the Cabinet. It is impossible to forecast the results likely to follow from that

change, which is a better indication of the actual situation in Government civilian quarters than of what the future will bring forth. The rival armies have wrought no great change in the territorial position, although it looks now as if, provided they have got any reasonable civil backing at all, a victory for the Insurgents, especially if they succeed in taking Bilbao in the near future, is again a matter of strong probability. If the innate superiority even in mere numbers, of the Government forces were as great as it has been reported to be, it might have been expected to have manifested itself now that the struggle has entered on its fourth quarter of the year. If, on the other hand, the reverses reported as having been sustained by the Insurgents, and especially their foreign contingents, had been as serious as has been stated in the English press, the effectiveness of those contingents must have been reduced to a minimum, and one would be left with the conclusion that; as things stand at present, the Insurgents are, from the point of view, purely, of the power of the Spaniards and Spanish colonials in their ranks, not at all inferior to their opponents. The reports on the fighting generally are singularly unenlightening, and the conclusion suggests itself that the war still figures daily in the news because it is felt that a war on such a scale should properly possess a daily news value. The bombing of Guernica, by whoever carried out, has not increased the popularity abroad of the insurgent cause. Insurgent repudiation of responsibility for that event reads lamely. The event itself could only be justified on the maxim that "all is fair"; and it is on the same principle that the removal of the children sent away from Bilbao can be considered as an act of intervention on the part of those states responsible for that removal, on the analogy of the removal of the Belgian population to Allied countries during the World War.

MICHAEL O'NEILL-KING

OWNERSHIP AND INDUSTRIALISM

By ERIC GILL

"As many as possible of the people should be induced to become owners."—(Leo XIII : *Rer. Nov. Par.* 35).

"The hireling flieth because he is a hireling."—(S. John's Gospel, Chap. 10).

"Man should not consider his material possessions as his own but as common to all."—(St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.*, quoted by Leo XIII, *Rer. Nov. Par.* 19).

"Production should be for use not for profit"

"If any man will not work neither let him eat"—(S. Paul, 2 Thess., 3, 10). (Quoted by Stalin in Speech on Draft Constitution).

"I will give unto this last even as to thee"—(St. Matt., XX, 14).

The Capitalist world, system, theory and practice are to be condemned by all the principles implied in the above quotations.

Capitalism concentrates property in the hands of the few and denies to the workers anything but wages. Its only notion of improvement is to grant to the workers a share in the profits.

It depends upon a widespread army of hirelings ("wage slaves").

It upholds a theory of absolute property ownership.

Production under capitalism is for profit not for use—all things are made for sale.

It supports and honours those who live by the labour of others—on rents, dividends and usury.

It regards payment to wage earners as payment for work, not for living. But the principle implied in the parable of the labourers is that it is a man's needs that give him a right to money, not the market value of his hours of labour.

* * *

Politics is the ordering and arrangement of human affairs—thus domestic politics deal with the order of house and family. Local politics are concerned with the affairs of village or town.

or county, national and international politics with the affairs of the nation, and the relations between one nation and another. Politics deals with things as they are. Politicians are guided by theories as to what is good order and what bad. Behind these theories are principles, both religious and philosophical, the acceptance of which conditions the theories and the politics. In the absence of admitted principles and theories human action is simply instinctive ; the ruler is simply the strongest and most acquisitive and he acts simply as is most comfortable to himself. As things are to-day, and it is to-day which concerns us, there are no such simply instinctive societies. Both religion and philosophy play a large part in human affairs and all our politicians hide behind or defend themselves by appeal to this or that doctrine or theory of human nature, and of human society. But whatever the doctrines or theories, politics deals with present affairs. Respect for tradition and concern for the future condition our doings ; but it is the present world we are dealing with and it is only out of the present that the future can come.

The present world is an industrial world. Are we clear about that ? Is it an industrial world or is it not ? Surely no one can deny it. Very well then. And what is this industrialism ? It is a method or system or way of production by division and sub-division of labour and by the extensive and intensive use of machines and machinery driven by electrical or other non-human power—the factory system, machine facture, mechanical transport, electrical communication. And this productive system produces all the necessities of life. Very few things are still produced by the old pre-industrial hand labour and those few are for the most part luxuries, what we call “ works of art ” and “ the arts and crafts,” and these things are now comparatively expensive and, therefore, only bought by eccentric rich people. Even if we still retain a clear memory of pre-industrial production, even though the artists make one hell of a fuss about themselves and their doings and the world places

them on pedestals and their works in the temples we call museums—even so this is an industrial world and the vast majority of the population consists of industrial workers—the factory hands, clerks and shop assistants, the machine minders and transport workers, the bankers, managers and administrators, who are necessary to industrialism and through whose labours the world obtains all the necessities of life.

Judged by a quantitative standard and, as regards many of its products, from a qualitative one also, this industrialism receives universal approbation. Not only those who make large fortunes out of it—bankers and financiers, butter, soap, oil and chemical magnates, motor-car producers and advertisers—but also the hosts of factory hands and clerks, all are united in a general opinion that machine production is a good thing. There is at present no wide-spread discontent with the system itself, inhuman and anti-human though it may be. Not only are the quantitative advantages obvious to all, not only are certain desirable things produced by machinery which otherwise are unobtainable—motor cars, telephones, wireless toys and countless “labour saving” nick-nacks—but the system is now so “dug in” that it would require a quite impossible revolution to bring about a return to pre-industrial manufacture. Such a return is not “practical politics.” A few philosophers, a few men of religion, a few sentimentalists may discern its inherent inhumanity, but industrialism can count on the overwhelming majority of the people for its support. Industrialism is with us, no one wants its abolition ; why, then, is there so much discontent and misery?

The answer to this question can only be approached through a study of modern history. The rise of the merchant class to supreme power in the country is the fact of paramount importance. The ruling power of the capitalist class (including under the term bankers and financiers and all men of business) is a fact to-day ; it was not a fact in medieval Europe. The end of the middle ages is precisely that thing—the overthrow of the

power of princes and ecclesiastics and its seizure by the merchants. The Reformation was simply the attempt of certain ecclesiastics to stem the flood ; the Renaissance was simply the expression of the rising bourgeois culture (the popular, traditional, folk art of the middle ages naturally decayed in exact proportion as the merchant class won to power).

The rise of the merchants was a gradual process accompanying the decay of the Church, the corruption of religion and the waning power of feudalism. This waning and that corruption began long before the 15th century ; by the time of the Tudors the process was sufficiently advanced for open revolt ; by the 17th century it was complete. The Kingship was made finally impotent and the Bank of England assumed the reins of government. Meanwhile, the medieval guilds were destroyed and the workers more and more reduced to wage slavery. The enclosures of commons finally impoverished and pauperized the peasantry—the proletariat was created. Production for use, the ideal theory and practical policy of the medieval guilds, everywhere gave place to production for profit, openly proclaimed. The theory of capitalism was formulated—the right of money to the most profitable market, the right of the labourer to a competitive wage when he could get work, otherwise nothing. If the greed of merchants and the misery of the proletarians have in these latter days been alleviated, that result has been obtained by the efforts of trade unions and in spite of the resistance of the capitalists.

Now where profit is the ruling motive of production it is obvious that the costs of production must always be the first anxiety. There is a variety of causes for this which need not be specified here ; we all know it to be a fact. And the first cost of production is naturally labour. The first labour-saving contrivances used by men were such things as the hammer and chisel, the lever and the wheel, animals for haulage and wind and water mills. But these things have been used by men since prehistoric times ; they are not specially the contrivances

of merchants and financiers. The labour-saving method of capitalism is of a quite different order. Under capitalist rule the first desideratum is the subjection of human labour, the reduction of an independent peasantry and of independent craftsmen to the condition of proletarians—the labourer shall possess nothing but his children. Having produced the proletariat, the factory system of production follows inevitably. The division and subdivision of labour means an immense saving of labour costs. That the work becomes drudgery and that the things made are of inferior quality are matters of no importance to capitalists. Their only object is profits and needy people will always buy what is cheaper. Competition between merchants and factory owners insures that things shall at least appear worth buying. In the early days of capitalism there was very little restriction of competition and combination among workers to force up wages and improve conditions of work was ruthlessly suppressed with the aid of a police and a soldiery in the pay of a government composed of the money classes themselves.

But revolts among the workers could not be forever suppressed. Even the consciences of legislators were revolted by the cruelty of masters and the degradation of labourers. The conditions of life and work in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth are too well known to need description here. By the 1830's the justice and necessity of trade unionism was generally admitted. But competition among merchants still continued; limited liability or joint-stock companies had not been invented and trusts and combines of producers were as yet only dreamed of. The necessity of labour saving increased naturally in exact proportion to the intensity of competition and the rising cost of wage labour. A great spur was given to mechanical invention and to the harnessing of steam power to drive the machines invented. Immense increase of production followed immediately and, the markets being at that date unsaturated, immense profits followed from the sale all over

the world of the new machine-made products. It is unnecessary to follow the development in detail. It has proceeded more or less evenly and it has now spread to all the world. The banking and financial system of capitalism is international and the profit motive is universal. The rule of princes is subservient to that of financiers ; politics is simply the business of obtaining markets and spheres of commercial influence ; religion is proclaimed to be a private affair and of no effect in government except as a dope to keep the masses tame, to make rebellion seem wicked. The clergy being everywhere dependent upon the rich for their support—the wages of the workers being too small even to support their families and, therefore, quite insufficient to endow churches and pay for elaborate ritual and costly buildings—are naturally inclined to side with the capitalist, to think as he thinks, to be as imperialist as he is and to be the foremost recruiting agents for his armies. Those among the workers, therefore, who, in spite of everything, retain a memory of economic independence and an appetite for its recapture are inevitably inclined to regard the Church as an enemy and even as the chief enemy. For though the churches have no political power they are the chief agents for the dissemination of morals, and the morals they disseminate are largely concerned with the prohibition of stealing, and the worst form of stealing is any attempt to overthrow capitalism.

But in spite of the alleviations of the lot of the workers which trade unionism has effected, the industrial world is seething with discontent ; its injustices are too monstrous, its principles too damnable. On the one hand are the amazing contrasts between the rich and the poor, the exaltation of the one, the degradation of the other ; on the other hand by its adulation of usury and its concentration of economic power in the hands of those who manipulate financial credit it has reduced the human notion of property to an absurdity. Under a system of production for profit, ownership is not an affair of men but of impersonal financial corporations. The only things men can be said to own

are the dividends and the chattels purchaseable in shops, and such things are not made by men for men but are the products of joint stock companies whose only interest is in the profits obtained by selling them, whose only criterion of excellence is the verdict of the balance sheet. Such a system receives veneration only from financiers and fools.

Now the question of ownership is at the root of the matter. To capture the ownership of the means of production was from the first the aim of the merchant class when it rose out of feudal subordination. To recapture the ownership of the means of production is the first aim of the proletariat. The proletariat is the dispossessed—not merely the “have nots” but the *robbed*. Ownership is natural to man and the first thing to be owned, because the most necessary, is the means of production.

But politics deals with things as they are. The present world is an industrial world. No political reform is possible that does not start from that premiss. We cannot assume even that a determining number of men wish it otherwise. It is on all hands assumed that machine production is good and even though it were not it would be impossible to return immediately to pre-industrial methods of production. Let us resolutely put away all dreams of that sort. Let us abandon the coteries of vegetarians and nut-eaters and artist craftsmen. They do no serious harm but they are not politicians and have no effect in politics.

Politics deals with things as they are and as things are we have vast populations of proletarians exploited for the profit of the small body of those who control financial credit. This condition of things is not only contrary to good morals; it is also inimical to human happiness. Ownership is necessary to human happiness, to human dignity and virtue, and ownership means control. A share in profits is not ownership. Money in the Saving's Bank is not control of the means of production. The only desirable and at the same time the only possible reform of our world is distribution of ownership. “As many as possible of the people should be induced to become owners,” says Leo

XIII. As many as possible "of the workers" shall we translate it? ¹ But it is in an industrial world that this distribution is to take place. In that world the only meaning that can be attached to such words is that ownership by the few shall become ownership by the many. The workers shall own the farms and the factories; the means of production shall be controlled by the workers. In so far as the present directors, managers and foremen are willing to accept this revolution and in so far as they are able to direct and manage works and factories producing for use and not for profit, that is to say, in so far as they are not opponents of the workers and of the principles governing control by the workers, and in so far as they don't surreptitiously attempt any "dirty business" or sabotage, then not only will such directors, managers and foremen be rightly included in the term "workers" but the experience of and genius for organization which many of them possess will be honoured and welcomed and, it should be pointed out, such men of goodwill would find the conditions of their work greatly improved. For instead of being, as at present, at the mercy of the financial overlords and of the competitive system of trading, instead of being under the necessity of extensive and more or less dishonest advertising with all its crazy psychology and vulgarity, instead of living in a world of bribery and corruption, they would find a true field for their talents and genius. The direction and management of production would at last be what it ought to be—an honourable and honoured public service and the directors and managers would be public servants instead of public enemies.

This political reform is the absolutely first step, and this reform being effected all other problems are on the way to solution. Take, for instance, the question whether machine production is better or worse than production by hand. Who should decide such a question but those who actually do the work? Shall we defer to the decision of those whose only reason for introducing machines was the increase of profits? Shall

¹ For the workers are not only the majority but are "the people" itself.

Satan cast out Satan? Or shall the question be decided by a committee of aesthetes? What is art but the right way of making things? Then who shall decide questions of art but the people who do the making? Let us leave beauty out of it—beauty can very well take care of itself. Control by those who do the work instead of by those whose only concern is the profits—that is the immediate necessity. Nothing in the whole bourgeois world is more typically bourgeois, more clearly the direct product of the money rule of the merchants and financiers and, indeed, the very flower and pinnacle of their monstrous and abominable social structure than the prevalent conception of art and the divorce we now experience of art from work and of use from beauty. “The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist.” That was the condition of labour in pre-industrial, pre-mercantile times. In the bourgeois world such a saying is ridiculous; it is without meaning; it is palpably untrue. In our world of production for profit, our plutocracy, the artist is not only a special kind of man, he is the fine flower, the prophet and seer, the entertainer and lapdog. When he succeeds in catching the approval of the rich and great or of those art critics and mystagogs in whom the rich and great believe and whose opinions they revere and follow, then such special persons are made knights and lords and their works are purchased for museums and those museums we call art galleries. That is the highest flight of the bourgeois artist’s ambition—that his personality be held so special that he receive special honour, and his works so curious that they be housed with rarities and curiosities. So deeply bitten are we with this poison that even those artists—painters and sculptors, musicians, poets and architects—who, being imbued with a sense of justice or being victims of the economic injustice which is the natural consequence of capitalist rule, seek to align themselves with the proletarian revolution, even these artists do not see the rottenness of their position. They endeavour to preserve their lap-dog status while aligning themselves with

the revolutionaries. Museums and art galleries, places which did not even exist in the pre-mercantile world, are still the temples of their worship and they are foolish enough to suppose that a world which has thrown off the evil dominance of the men of business will so far forget and demean itself as to continue the false worship. Nothing can be destroyed in a day and so deep a disease as the art worship of our present world will not be cured in ten years. Moreover, "the humbler classes" are, indeed, humble, and have lapped up the dope served out to them for the last four hundred years in a truly humble spirit. On Bank Holidays (how magnificently appropriate that the public holidays of our era should be so named !) the workers, the toiling millions, are encouraged to visit the temples of art ; the British Broadcasting Corporation, half profit-seeking, half public service, is profoundly concerned to supply the workers with proper cultural pabulum, dishing out Shakespeare and classical music and high art criticism in suitable doses in between the naturally and rightly more popular musical entertainment. When will revolutionary leaders realise that "culture" is dope, a worse dope than religion ; for even if it were true that religion is the opiate of the people, it is worse to poison yourself than to be poisoned and suicide is more dishonourable than murder. To hell with culture, culture as a thing added like a sauce to otherwise unpalatable stale fish. The only culture worth having is that which is the natural and inevitable product of an honourable life of honourable work. Let the workers take over the industrial order of society. Let us see where that leads us. For God's sake do not let us attempt to sickly over our enfranchised industrialism with the pale cast of bourgeois art nonsense. Self-expression, psychological exhibitionism, surrealism, the apotheosis of irrationalism, beauty divorced from meaning, aestheticism—modern art in short, these things are the putrescence of bourgeoisdom, the very stuff of its indecency—naturally our lords and masters believe in it and honour it and build its temples in the centres of their festering cities in the

places where formerly men built temples to their Gods. Nelson and the National Gallery—the Empire and art. Oh, God, our help in ages past . . . Oh, God, Oh, Montreal ! Oh, hell.

Politics deals with things as they are. Again let us consider how things actually are to-day. In spite of all the current lip-service to the doctrine of private property, it is obvious that in the industries concerned with the production of the chief necessities of life and in the transport and communication services private property, except in the profits, no longer exists in any real sense, and in such services as that of the Post Office and the telephones, the roads and harbours and lighthouses, the army, navy and police,¹ profits are either non-existent or are publicly owned. Moreover, these services are public services, run by the people through their elected representatives.²

I say, the great staple industries are not in any real sense privately owned. Let us consider this. Private ownership implies private control. Control is the chief element of ownership. Take, for example, the railway and steamship companies. How are these controlled and by whom? To a large extent they are controlled by government regulation. Legal enactments of every kind have superseded the personal whim of the directors and managers. The theory that these companies are controlled by those who have subscribed the capital invested in them, those who draw a dividend of the profits, has long since ceased to correspond with the practice. In practice the ordinary shareholders have no voice at all in the management. The shareholders' meetings are no more than occasions for the passing of directors' and auditors' reports. In what sense does a railway shareholder own the railway to whose capital he has subscribed? How can he be said to own it more than any other traveller? What, indeed, does he own at all but a dividend of the profits, if there be any? And it follows inevitably that

¹ Though the scandal is well-known, the supply of clothing, ammunition, etc., is a great field for private profiteering.

² Though it should be remembered that these public services are run by politicians who are commonly themselves directors of capitalist companies. The public services are, therefore, naturally vitiated by the profit-making idea.

the profits are the only thing that interest him. It is for the sake of the profits that he has invested his money. Management and control by the shareholders is a fiction. The shareholders are nothing more than a kind of money lenders, a kind of usurers.

But, it may be asked, if control is the chief element of ownership and if these giant companies are in effect publicly controlled and the rights of labourers and users protected by law, what is there to complain of? If profits are the least part of ownership and it is only the profits which are privately owned, why all this talk about the iniquity of capitalism? The answer is not difficult to find. Capitalism is production for profit. However it be camouflaged and decked up, however fine the speeches made by capitalist bosses at their annual meetings and dinners, nothing suffices to disguise this fundamental and pervading evil of capitalism and when they think no one will notice it, when perhaps they are unaware of what they are saying, they do not even attempt a disguise.¹ They glory in profit-making. Their financial newspapers and the financial pages of ordinary journals are filled with advice to investors whose object is solely to point out the most profitable investments and to advise investors as to the rise and fall of company profits. Were we not so accustomed to these things we should be horrified, as I and an increasing number of workers are horrified, disgusted and sickened by this vulgar and loathsome scramble for the prizes obtained by the exploitation of human labour on the one hand and by the spectacle of human greed and credulity on the other. Capitalism is production for profit, that is the beginning and end of the indictment. All the other evils of capitalism spring from that evil. Capitalism means rule by a plutocracy. The rich man is the great man; he is even hailed as the good man. Money is the central object of worship in a capitalist society. Money is the sole criterion of

¹ Sir Percy Bates, writing to *The Times* on January 15, 1936, to explain the policy of the Cunard Shipping Company, ended his letter as follows: "... The sole factor in our policy has been, and always will be, to strive to choose such a policy as in our opinion is most likely to produce dividends. It is that consideration and no other which has produced the 'Queen Mary.'"

success and of virtue. That which pays is the sole good. Beauty, the arts, must toe the same muddled line. Art dealing is the business of getting high prices for pictures and sculptures. The Box Office rules the theatre and the concert hall. Architecture reflects the same mentality. Our city streets show nothing but the rival vulgarities of men of business—striving to out-do one another in ostentation to take in the foolish and befuddled and corrupted men and women on whose foolishness and corruption they depend for their profit-making. And the streets of our suburbs, the places where the wretched dupes sleep and bring up their families are the happy hunting ground of the commercial builder, who seeks by one trick or snobbery and another to cajole the owners and tenants into believing that they live in refinement and luxury. The whole world of making is reduced to a business of getting up the cheap and nasty to look like the good and beautiful.

*(The July number will contain a further article from
Eric Gill on this subject).*

THE STORY OF LOWRY MAEN

By PADRAIC COLUM

"No youngster ever had so much to tell
Of what he sees when he is journey-bound,"
Said Croftnie the Harp-player to the lad,
As following Prince Laery's in their own
Chariot they sped.

"Croftnie, now I see
The twisting spokes and bronze rims of the wheels
That bear my father's chariot, and I see
The springing deer, the rising flocks of birds.
The men who guard the fords that we splash through
And guard the causeways, have curved blades of bronze
On lengthy handles and wear leathern cloaks.
And now the forest with its heavy branches,
And gorges where the rocks are shaped like dragons,
Where shouting boys are driving grunting swine:
The forest of itself makes other sound—
What is it, Croftnie, you who listen well?"

"The sound the acorns make in falling down—
A galloping sound."

"What see you, Croftnie?"
"The change, I think, that's coming over all:
Your father's grandfather, Ugony the Great
Had set a mould of custom round men's ways:
He lived so long that he
Had broken Change to be a household beast—
The wild-lynx Change went softly through the land:
Music greatly flourished,
Since there were no debates to din it down,
No wars to clash it from the people's ears.
But long-lived Ugony the Great is dead:
Now Change will growl and snarl and tear flesh—
I see her widely-opened wild-lynx eyes."

"But now my father goes to take the rule."

"He is a worthy prince—none worthier

To set his feet upon the Stone of Kings;
But wide as to the Northern Islands where
The sky-larks sing all night, the gap between
His time and Ugony's, if I know aught."

They said no more till they were on a green
Where there was full assembly—'twas a fair:
A ship from Gaul had come, and traffickers
Were changing rarities for our chief wares.
Laery had come, turning from off his course,
To keep up ancient custom of the fair.

That ship from Gaul—
It was not spoken of by Laery's son—
It was too strange to wonder at, too lone!
It sank into his memory as sinks
Into the water's depth an offering
Made to the guardian of an uncrossed lake.

Said Croftnie: "Here there is much to tell of:
That level swords of bronze and balanced axes
Made by our cerds, the best artificers
Of gold that these far-travelling men may come to,
The men who bring the amber: this is amber—
These wedge-shaped pieces on a deerskin laid:
Burnished by sunlight in a northern land
The autumn leaves have color like these pieces."
Then said the lad, "One speaks with my father,
And I would listen to his strange-toned speech."
"He is the chief of merchants," Croftnie said,
"And he speaks of the bronze swords offered him."

"Iron is harder, and with iron, swords
Can be made longer by another reach,"
And these words answered Laery who has asked
How lengthier swords and harder could be made,
Seeing the merchant turn from the bronze.
"In Gaul and in Beyond-Gaul men have forged
Iron into swords, and with such weapons
New lands, rich treasures gain in east and south:
A leader of the Gauls
Got gold to weigh his sword and scabbard down

When a head-city, Rome,
Was taken by the Followers of Bran."

"What makes he on the ground?" asked Laery's son.

"The Sign of Bran," said Croftnie, and he said

"The War god Bran—back with him into Gaul,"

For he knew tribes that kept the name of Bran

Living upon the fringes of the realm

Ugony had ruled—great Ugony who was dead.

But now a man upon a coppery horse

Rode up beside the chariots and the guards.

"My father's name he shouts," said Leary's son.

"The news he's brought sends us another way,"

Said Croftnie, "We go through Cavach's lands—

Cavach, your father's brother who is dead,

As told the messenger. The kin would have your father

Stand with the mourners round Prince Cavach's bier."

"The inside of the bronze rims of the wheels

Shine as my father's chariot makes turn.

The guards who run beside it have on cloaks

Of otter-skin and hold their spears length-wise.

What see you, Croftnie, in this open land?"

"Since Ugony the Great

Is dead, I think that an old prophecy

Will be fulfilled: it is that when men use

A dark, dense metal, Change will surely come:

The Gaul your father spoke with talked of iron

In use beyond the sea."

"But that is far away. Will what I look on

Be different? Look, Croftnie—

Geese gather in a hollow and smoke rises

Through tops of wattled houses; sparks are blowing

Out of a smithy, and a woman's milling

Her grain in a stone's hollow with a stone—

Croftnie, will these things change?"

"Here are Prince Cavach's cattle with their herdsmen:

I know the mark that 's on them. There's the mound
And there's Prince Cavach's house upon the mound.
Your uncle will not take you on his knee."

"Croftnie, I know. He will not, being dead."

"And will be buried in the ancient way
Upon his chariot—you will see him so—
Cavach, the crafty brother, is no more.
He might have edged a place too near to him,
Who'll set his feet upon the Stone of Kings."

Below the mound on which was Cavach's house
An unyoked chariot was placed for burial.
The man upon the coppery horse dismounted
And bent his knee to what was in the chariot—
A stiff and swathed figure, and went away,
Drawing the guards who were with Laery's chariot.

Lifting its head to sniff to where they came,
Leaping the shafts, rubbing against the wheels,
A tame wolf ranged; beside the chariot
No people stood, and Croftnie's charge looked on
Only the creature in which tameness strove
With wildness; he saw his father crossing
The sward to stand beside the burial-chariot.

The figure that was stiff upon the chariot
Raised itself; a spear was in those hands,
And Laery's son saw the figure thrust the spear:
His father fell
First on his knee, and then the figure, standing
Upon the chariot drove the spear down through him,
And then his father lay upon the ground.

He heard a whisper:

"Laery is killed; Cavach, his brother killed him;
They've cut out guards off from us—we'll not live."
But he had run to where his father lay,
And then was dragged to face a dark-faced man
Who stood beneath a tree with men about him,
His followers who held long, ready spears.

He formed words to fling into the face

Of Cavach, and did not hear the words—
Heard his breath only, and he knew he'd lost
The use of speech: he formed the words again,
"Maen," "Speechless," was the word they used of him..
"Your father's in his burial-chariot now;
I'll be the one to follow Ugony."
The lad would speak; he tried once more and could not,
And heard himself named "Maen" by those about him.

Then Cavach said, "There is no need to slay
A speechless one. Never can he dispute
The Kingship with me nor those born of me."
"You'll let Maen live?" said Harper Croftnie.
"I'll let him live," said Cavach, "take him away—
Not to his father's for that house goes down,
But where you will." Then Croftnie took him up
And carried him; he held a body stiffened
Against his own. Rain was teeming then,
And Croftnie the Harper set him down—
The lad who had no name but what was flung him—
Under the Cromlech of a King whose name
Was lost before Great Ugony's name was heard of,
And the rain washed down from the stones and streamed
To where the river swelled; the trees were black
And there was nothing for a man to look on
In all the land but wide face of the rain.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Sublime Failure

IT is very probable that readers of this Journal could quite simply be classified in two divisions, the one of those who would deny the sublimity of the League of Nations, the other of those who would with equal fervour deny its failure. I, however, am satisfied that an analysis of the origins of this remarkable institution will reveal not a little sublimity and will serve to explain in some measure the causes of and the reasons for its failure.

But before attempting any detailed analysis of those origins, it is, I think, desirable to observe for a moment the immediate historical and political background from which the League of Nations emerged—that system to which the League was thought to be the natural successor, but to which it stood rather in the relation of heir-at-law, inheriting a multitude of liabilities and very few assets with which to discharge them. Briefly, and finally, that background was Great Britain of XIXth Century. The system of world order which prevailed throughout the greater part of that era rested ultimately on the universally recognised and profoundly respected supremacy of the British navy, and on the similarly recognised and respected power and prestige of the Bank of England. As a benevolent, philanthropic, but—and I would emphasise this—never wholly disinterested, policeman, Great Britain discharged her duties tolerably well, and, from a European point of view, her success in maintaining order was precisely proportionate to the measure of her disinterestedness on any given occasion. Subsidiary and, indeed, subordinate to this ultimate naval and commercial supremacy of Great Britain there existed a remarkably efficient diplomatic system, in many respects superior to the excessively personal and peripatetic methods of contemporary statesmen—and thoroughly capable of providing Europe with such a measure

of public law, in the form of political and commercial treaties and agreements as immediate circumstances rendered necessary. Many attempts were made by conscientious jurists to provide this system with a juridical basis : but formulae such as *pacta sunt servanda* merely served to give a legalistic disguise to the essential pragmatism underlying the entire system. The system collapsed in 1914 : its collapse may be generally attributed, first, to that absence of disinterestedness which frequently characterised Great Britain's discharge of her duties as judge, jury, and executioner ; secondly, to the aggressive intrusion of the economic into the political sphere—an intrusion of which I shall have more to say hereafter ; thirdly, to the virtual disappearance, owing to scientific development, of foreign affairs as such—there are now no international or national affairs which can properly be described as foreign—and, lastly, the collapse may be traced to the fact that the system, as a whole, was what no system should ever be, namely, unsystematic. Its methods were founded on expediency and were, therefore, arbitrary : the object of the system was the pursuit of the balance of interest—not the common interest—for the excellent reason that there was no generally recognised or universally admitted common interest. (Incidentally, I feel that in fairness to Great Britain it should be observed that the pursuit of her immediate political interests did quite frequently—if indirectly—harmonise with the maintenance of order in Europe ; and in this respect then—as now—the astonishing capacity shown by successive British foreign ministers for justifying what frequently appeared to be the most bare-faced pragmatism by unctuous reference to the lofty principles of Christianity provided one of the greatest sources of irritation to all European governments : a sense of irritation considerably increased by the knowledge that the common gibe of hypocrisy rang hollow. However, that is merely *obiter*).

This system of world order collapsed in 1914 : as a student of law I despise it : but as a student of politics one cannot but

admire its many very real achievements, and, above all, its close contact with reality. Judged by contemporary standards we may well admit that as political systems go, the XIXth century system went a considerable distance.

The problem with which the world was confronted in 1918, the problem of which the League of Nations was regarded as a solution, was to provide some substitute or equivalent for the XIXth century system, now dead and well, though perhaps not very decently, buried under a pile of corpses. To revive or renew that system was unthinkable: it was not only utterly and finally discredited but its very foundation, the unquestioned, and authoritative supremacy of Great Britain had been lost irretrievably; for although in respect of the peace-terms Great Britain was again to appear simultaneously discharging the duties of judge, jury and executioner, in respect of the problem of world-order she was to be merely a member of a special jury. Moreover, the problem had undergone considerable modification since 1914: more accurately and specifically defined the problem was now to provide a political and, if possible, a juridical sub-structure to the economic international interdependence of the whole civilised world. Further—and this proved to be a significant modification—the solution was now to be devised by the leaders and representatives of great democracies which, in their mutual relations, showed considerably less understanding of or sympathy with each other's difficulties than did the autocrats at Vienna—autocrats, who in addition to being personally responsible for their conduct, had at least the opportunity to meet and dislike each other sincerely, but of whom it can scarcely be said that they misunderstood each other. Honest hatred is, I suggest, politically preferable, because less dangerous, than genuine misunderstanding. The great democracies showed, and still show, a staggering capacity for misunderstanding each other.

Now the principal parties to this attempt to solve the problem of world-order were the United States of America, Great Britain

and France. These powers were, of course, assisted in their efforts by representatives of the smaller powers, who—unfortunately for Europe—were not in a position to exercise influence in proportion to the merit and sincerity of their proposals, and it is of the utmost importance to bear well in mind, and I purposely mention it here, that both Great Britain and France, instinctively and even pardonably, regarded the problem of world-order as subordinate in importance to the specific purpose for which their representatives were assembled in Paris—the specific purpose of making peace—or rather of finishing the war. That attitude was, of course, profoundly significant in its consequences.

However, I propose to analyse briefly and very generally the attitudes of these three powers, in order, if possible, to show that inherent in these attitudes there existed such possibilities of confusion, uncertainty and misunderstanding as to make the success of any product of negotiations in which these powers participated exceedingly doubtful.

First, the U.S.A.

Now although there existed two distinct and even conflicting attitudes to the solution of this problem of world-order in the U.S.A., one, the view advocated by Senator Borah, based on the idea of an international court administering a clearly-defined system of jurisprudence, and the attitude of President Wilson, the latter ultimately prevailed; and to Americans generally the question of world-order ultimately resolved itself into a question of the man and the moment. So here at the risk of over-simplification I shall confine myself to a brief analysis of the attitude of one man—President Wilson.

It is surely remarkable, and, indeed, it has often been deplored—that practical politicians or statesmen seldom give much heed or attention to the political teachings of men of high intellectual attainments: those people whom Disraeli contemptuously dismissed as “the breed of professors and rhetoricians who invent principles and systems” exercise singularly little influence in the

course of human affairs. There would seem to exist an inveterate and widespread distrust of learning without experience, a distrust tersely summarised in the penetrating gibe: "the worst of great thinkers is that they usually think wrong." President Wilson was a professor: he was a rhetorician: moreover, he was a preacher: and finally he was a great thinker. He thought wrong; and his conception of the means necessary to secure the maintenance of the world-order abundantly reflected these defects. His idea was briefly that of a universal church with himself as patriarch in the pulpit, appealing to the conscience of humanity, and piously beseeching the world to be good—or at least, not to be so bad. Now, it was no doubt a noble—even an inspiring ideal—and the doctrine was preached with a noble, inspiring, and even evangelical eloquence. Unfortunately the conception was a complete stranger to flesh and blood—both of which very human factors were generously represented at Paris; and it was in attributing to humanity that which it never possessed, namely, a collective or corporate conscience, that the great thinker thought wrong. But President Wilson fought tenaciously for his ideal—he quarrelled, sulked, misunderstood and was misunderstood—and finally saw his noble ideal debased and degraded to the level of practical politics. President Wilson died mad. To him, nevertheless, humanity owes a very real debt of gratitude, and I, for one, doubt not that posterity will abundantly honour his name.

So much for the contribution of the United States—a contribution, even its disembowelled and almost unrecognisable form swiftly repudiated by the American people.

In dealing with the attitude of Great Britain, the problem is one of very much greater difficulty and complexity, and I must ask indulgence of a number of generalisations which, to many, will seem highly arbitrary.

There is, I think, a genuine disposition amongst the English people to be friendly with other nations. They are well-meaning, law-abiding, but dangerously capricious—acting from instinct

rather than reason: they have, like most rich people, an unfortunate habit of keeping pets—and dropping them—witness the fate of Denmark in 1864. To the British people, as a whole, the idea of a League of Nations was essentially a foreign idea. They were, even in 1918, quite unable to conceive of circumstances in which Great Britain herself would stand in need of protection. Indeed, until very recently the idea of Great Britain as a consumer of security was to most Englishmen quite fantastic. Nevertheless, Britain was prepared to welcome the proposed League as a partner in her benevolent peace-loving philanthropy. Moreover, the English people were not unwilling to gratify what they chose to regard as the French passion for tidiness; and the possible value of such an institution was considerably enhanced by the knowledge that it found approval with many notable and pacifically-minded persons. Ultimately the British attitude resolved itself into a benevolent disposition to regard the proposed institution as one, and, on the whole, a not very important factor of British foreign policy—everything in the covenant, but nothing tied-up—(observe the traditional dislike of written constitutions) and British naval supremacy an unconscious *sine qua non*; finally, and significantly, the British people were represented at the negotiations concerning the covenant by one who was not at the time even a member of the British cabinet—Lord Robert Cecil, now Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. Behind this attitude, at once vague and shifty, lay the simple—perhaps too simple, psychology of optimism.

The French people—and here I must again beg indulgence of generalisations—are possessed of the minor classic virtues of the mind—they are clear-headed, precise and inhumanly logical. Politically they are monomaniacs: their thirst, or lust, for what they call security, is quite insatiable, and increase of appetite grows by what it feeds upon; their conception of the proper function of the proposed League was consistently and exclusively French. It may be summarised in the formula: “Peace by

law—plus a policeman.” This conception was—as all good conceptions should be—theoretical, legalistic, and exquisitely and lucidly defined. It need hardly be said that this delightful metaphysical abstraction was given little scope for interference with ever the ceaseless pursuit of the immediate object of French policy—security. In so far as the proposed League would contribute in any way to the achievement of that object—well and good—hence the monotonous reiteration and emphasis on safeguards; otherwise it was nothing more than a delightful intellectual toy. Behind this attitude lay the deadening psychology of pessimism.

The contributions made by the other participants in these negotiations may, unfortunately, be dismissed briefly.

Soviet Russia, preoccupied with domestic affairs, and not unnaturally suspicious of the good faith of Great Britain and France, both of whom had but recently given a display of crude brigandage in Russian territory, contributed a number of outrageously impertinent but damnably penetrating letters addressed to President Wilson: and then, I suspect, they just laughed and laughed, and laughed.

The Scandinavian States advocated, coldly and with detachment, an international juridical order; but they, in common with Italy, were prepared to content themselves with what they regarded as a poor man’s covenant.

Finally, and disastrously, co-operation by Germany and the central European powers—even if it was forthcoming—was not officially encouraged. Simultaneously with, and in the next room almost to the negotiations concerning the League, there proceeded the very grim and murderous business of treaty-making.

Such, I suggest, very briefly and very generally was the nature of the immediate circumstances from which there finally emerged the covenant of the League of Nations; and in the absence of clear and authoritative thinking, or of an educated public opinion, and having regard to the atmosphere of shock

and horror surrounding the negotiations, it can scarcely be wondered at that in 1919, and even some years later, the Covenant of the League, notwithstanding its astonishing technical and verbal perfection was to those who subscribed to it little more than an ambiguous diplomatic document—its true meaning uncertain, its implications unrecognised and its interpretation obscure and speculative. If these circumstances are borne in mind, I feel that harsh condemnation of the League for its failure to work in specific instances might well be tempered by consideration of the unfortunate conditions attendant on its birth.

But, apart from these immediate and purely circumstantial obstacles to success, there were, I suggest, forces more obscure, although wider in their scope and more fundamental in origin, operating to hinder and obstruct the achievement of that object—the maintenance of world-order—for which the League was specifically designed, forces the strength, or even the very existence of which were scarcely apparent or appreciated in Paris in 1919.

The first of these factors was psychological; and although I suggest that it was—and is—profoundly significant, it is admittedly difficult to calculate the extent of its influence. I refer to the almost complete absence of respectable spiritual or intellectual ancestry for the idea of which the covenant of the League of Nations was intended to be the formal expression.

The last attempt at world-order of which humanity, or at least, European humanity, had had experience was that of Mediaeval Christendom, the applied Christianity of S. Thomas Aquinas. That system, considered from a purely political point of view, was the most comprehensive because totalitarian and, on the whole, the most successful attempt to achieve international order in Europe of which we have any knowledge. But its basis was authoritarian—it was imposed rather than spontaneously developed: and successive waves of protestantism, spiritual, political, and economic, waves of revolt against

authority, no matter what its source or sanction, not only completely destroyed the mediaeval system and blotted out its memory, but ultimately produced the most disastrously disintegrating political entity in European history—the sovereign nation-state. National sovereignty implies, ineluctably, international anarchy ; that assertion is not merely counsel's opinion: it is a statement of political and historical fact. All protestantism—that is—the revolt against authority—culminated in the Great War of 1914. It is true that a vast body of public international law—so called by courtesy—has grown up around this conception of state-sovereignty ; indeed, it has been suggested that in attempting to eliminate this idea of sovereignty from international law we run a very grave risk of emptying out the baby with the bath. It is also true that there was in existence before the war, and more especially during it, a considerable body of international co-operation ; for example, the excellent XIXth convention for the international regulation of posts and telegraphs, or the ironically efficient war-time inter-allied control of shipping—a gigantic and, on the whole, successful experiment in international co-operation : the latter is an interesting and significant example of the policy of making a virtue of necessity. But notwithstanding this body of international jurisprudence, and these experiments in co-operation, it is, I submit, true that the idea of a world-order, foreshadowed by the theorists and prophets of the League was decidedly not part of the spiritual or intellectual stock-in-trade of the XIXth and XXth century European : it could not accurately be described as a current or common-place idea. Even now it is doubtful if the vision of the general extends much beyond national frontiers. Now the absence of what I have perhaps not very satisfactorily described, as spiritual or intellectual ancestry for the idea of world-order, the fact that the idea had not been subjected to that degree of eschatological consideration to which in virtue of its importance it was entitled, precipitated the coincidence at Paris of thought

and action, a coincidence of dress rehearsal and first performance : the results of such simultaneity are rarely satisfactory : and it was in the atmosphere and within the scope of this idea of state-sovereignty, an idea which, notwithstanding the well-meaning attempts to provide it with respectable juridical clothing—such as—the formula “*pacta sunt servanda*,” has proved in practice to be an anthropophagous monster, that the attempt to establish a system of world-order through a League of nations was undertaken. And accordingly to the unhappy and painful circumstances of the League’s birth we may now add the almost insuperable disadvantage and stigma of bastardy.

Of the other forces operating against the immediate or even early success of the League, I shall mention only two : one political, the other psychological, both of them post-war. First, the political.

This factor consisted in the pursuit, by Great Britain and France, in the immediate post-war years, of foreign policies independent of and inconsistent with sincere adherence to the principles of the covenant ; and the impression formed in 1919 that the covenant was nothing more than an annexe to the Treaty of Versailles, specifically designed to disguise or to divert attention from the harsh vindictiveness and genuine stupidity of that pernicious document, and to perpetuate the *status quo* inaugurated by that Treaty, was abundantly confirmed by British, and more particularly French, rigid fidelity to the spirit and the letter of the Treaty, and neglect of or indifference to the spirit of the covenant. It is scarcely to be wondered at that the possibilities of the Treaty having been exhausted, or its provisions being inapplicable (as in the case of Italy), the good faith and sincerity of a belated and loud-mouthed insistence on the principles of covenant should be immediately suspected, or even treated with cynical mockery by those who had had bitter experience of the application of the first instrument designed to maintain the *status quo*—the Treaty of Versailles. To many people the ultimate fate of the

League depended on its success or failure in the matter of disarmament ; here, again, the confusion of mind, the misunderstandings and the uncertainty which characterised the Paris negotiations prevailed : and the failure of both Great Britain and France to disarm in accordance with the provisions of their own Treaty, and without any pressure from the League of Nations, was in great measure responsible for the precipitate departure of Germany from the League : a departure which raised—and is still raising—in an acute form the additional problem of choosing between the alternatives of universality without principle or of principle without universality. But this immediate failure to disarm in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty was largely owing to the triumph of the French view that the inevitable security must precede disarmament : the French idea of security would seem to suffer from a certain rigidity : the British view that disarmament was an essential prelude to security received attention and acceptance precisely proportionate to the vigour and consistency with which it was advocated : the unfortunate habit of Great Britain of sending to represent her at Geneva delegates whose belief in the League was notoriously more sincere and enthusiastic than that of the Government which they represented—I refer to statesmen such as Lord Cecil, the late Lord Balfour, Sir Samuel Hoare, and now Mr. Anthony Eden—has inevitably given rise to a general and dangerous uncertainty regarding Britain's real attitude to the League.

Moreover, the disarmament conference somewhat belatedly held under the auspices of the League, by its preoccupation with an attempt to disarm in terms of pre-war armaments completely failed to appreciate the significance and strength of that aggressive intrusion of the economic into the political sphere to which I have referred : the post-war state-control of economic activity in the interests of power—politics is an infinitely more dangerous factor internationally and politically than any pre-war fleet or standing army ; and I suggest that

both Japan and Italy showed a very keen sense of reality and were perfectly justified in making it clear that they would regard the imposition of economic sanctions, and particularly of mineral sanctions, as an act of war. But to this problem of the political control of raw materials and the industrial equipment necessary to convert such materials into armaments the attention of the disarmament conference was never seriously or intentionally directed. Moreover, this exercise of political control over economic activity, whether for economic or political purposes, in that it invariably took the form of economic nationalism, did much to diminish, at least temporarily, the influence of that very factor, namely, the economic interdependence of the entire world, as a political sub-structure to which the League had been originally designed. In this respect, the Ottawa conference 1932 was politically, an international disaster.

It is surely ironical that, in contrast to this post-war economic nationalism in the form of tariffs, quotas, and restrictions, such was the freedom of commerce in the XIXth century that the Government of Russia had no difficulty in borrowing money in the City of London with which to pay for imports from England, at the very height of the Crimean War.

The other force operating against the success of the League to which I wish to refer is one with which I have no doubt you are all familiar, namely, the unfortunate and ill-advised attitude adopted towards the League by some of its most ardent, almost hysterical, and unhappily, most articulate supporters; an attitude which provides a salutary illustration of that excessive faith in human reason to which persons of undisciplined emotions are prone.

These, I have no doubt, well-meaning people began by attributing to the League that which it never did and never could possess—a corporate and independent existence; having done that they then proceed to transfer their country's public international responsibilities to the nebulous shoulders of a

metaphysical abstraction, and, having established a national Church in the form of a League of Nations Union for that purpose, to preach and screech concrete loyalty to a legal fiction ; failure to achieve international order was attributed not to those persons who by their timidity, malice or stupidity rendered abortive any attempt to do so, but to the instrument or medium through which the attempt was made. There is not now, nor has there ever been situated at Geneva, or elsewhere an impersonal piece of mechanism capable of achieving international order by its own efforts. There is at Geneva a very competent piece of machinery, by means of the regular and proper use of which order might be achieved : an instrument admirably designed for the efficient discharge of such tasks for which statesmen see fit to employ it : in matters in respect of which civilised nations profess common principles and are agreed on their common interests, *e.g.*, Traffic in drugs, or slaves, this instrument has abundantly justified its foundation. But where passion and emotion intervene to obscure or confuse the identity of interests which reason, and reason alone, recognises as common, then the League, as an experiment in Rationalism, in the absence of similar and equal passion aroused in support of the dictates of reason must fail. The League of Nations, as we know it, is nothing more than the maximum amount of co-operation existing at any given moment between any given nations ; it is a glorified hyphen between fifty or so completely independent and internationally anarchical entities. To attribute to such a hyphen, or for that matter to any institution, powers and responsibilities such as have been attributed to the League of Nations by hysterical shallow minded pacifists, besides being an abominable heresy in itself, has contributed more to the misunderstanding of and thus to the difficulty of solving the problem of world-order than all the denunciations of the honest militarists.

In conclusion, if I appear to have spoken harshly or even cynically of the League, that was not my intention, for I believe

that the idea formally expressed in the covenant of the League is a noble and even an inspiring ideal and, further, that it is practicable and warrantable. I believe that an exaggerated significance and importance has been attached to spectacular failures in specific instances. Such very real successes, both political and humanitarian, as have been achieved through the proper use of the League, have been unjustly overlooked. But a clear and honest recognition of the limitations imposed upon the League and the ideal of which it is the formal expression, limitations imposed not by any technical or mechanical defect, but by human nature itself, will, by dissipating some sentimental illusions, contribute much to the successful functioning of the League as an Institution.

BRADLEY MCCALL

CAOINE

P. A. USSHER DO SCRÍOBH Ó SHEANÁS
TOMÁIS Ó MUIRTE (DÉISEAC)

A Shíobáin bhoict, tá tú leagtha amac anois ges na mná, is tá eagla mo éiríde orm go mbrisfid mo shuabal do reast.
Is tá amhras agam go bhfuil tu i ndútaigh na socrácta anois, ac ní leagfaid mise mo shíl go feirc mo shaoşail arís ar einne a gearrfaid an leacac'-oisir mar tusa.
Bíteá ar donac is ar margad liom im focair,
is amasa ní mar a lán ban eile é leo cairp anuas ar do shíle,
ac baó i a bí socruighe go cumas siar ar do cúl.

Is maít is cuimín liom
an maidín a táinig an fear beag san anveas leis an tdeanga
blasta a síl an dá laoişín ó 'paşáilt uainn ar port Máire Bun,
ac má síl cuir tusa an teine 'na tóin ag imteact,
is cuiris na deargnaidí ag preabarnaigh ar şruaigh an
Ciarruighş.

Agus is maít is cuimín liom
an maidín donac na Noctag a táinig an shliúcaidéir eile aca ar
lorg an muicín reamair ar şreim céalacain an asail,
ac má táinig cuir tusa 'oiread deictis leis is a cuiread
leis an mDeistiúnac Rua

an lá a bí sé ó'iarraid a bean a stracad amac ó bannóa an
rota

nuaí ná faigead sí cos a cur fúite le meisce,
is eagla a éiríde air go mbéad sé şaibte ges na píleirí mar
şeall ar a muinéal a cur péin rot é péin.

Níor táinig mé istead ón ngáiridín riám cuşat

ná raib an geitín oscailte,

an t-asal priotálta,

is an scilléidín leitean i şcór i leat-taob ar an teine,
ac anois beid an geitín dunta is an t-asal şan priotálta is
an scilléidín is a béal féid leasmuigh den doras,
is ní béarfaid tu ar an spiún iarainn go brát arís.

Is dá mbéad einne siar ar a roinnt baó é tu péin é,

a bean an éiríde móir,

is má riot an şabar bán tirim péin ní raib 'fios aige'n şabar
duib é.

Şeinnfeá port ar do tdeangain: is rinnefeá é,

IS BÉIDIR CAISÍ AR DO BOLG AR AN AM CÉADNA,
 IS DÁ MBÉAD BEAN EILE I'D BRÓGA IS MINIC NÁ BÉAD MAIREACHTAIN
 AN ÉUIT DUIB AN LÁ NÁ MARBUIG SÉ PRANNCAC SE N-A FEAR.
 NUAIR A TAGAD AN CÔMARSA LEIS AN SCAPALL CUN AN GÁIRDÍN A
 TREABAD DUIT
 TÉIGEAD SÉ AMAC UAIT IS A BOLG I RÍOCT SCOILTTE,
 TUGTÁ PRÁTAÍ IS FEOL SHIRT IS CABÁISTE GEAL DO,
 IS TUGTÁ BUILÍN IS TÉ IS UIBE LACAIN DO,
 IS TUGTÁ AN CÁIRTÍN LEANNA DO A TUG TU LEAT CUN A BEIT I SCÓIR
 DON LÁ A ÉUAID TÚ DÍN MARGAD.
 BUAILÉAD SÉ AMAC ANNSAN DÍIS NA CÔMARSAIN AG BEILISEÁIL ASAT,
 IS DEIREAD SÉ SUR DON FEAR BOCT A RAIB BEAN MAIT RACAMAIL
 AIGE SO RAIB A CEARC AR AN NEAD AIGE IS A CÍOS 'NA PÓCA.

IS ANOIS, A GRÉGIL BOICT
 CAITPÍR MÉ DO LÁM A CROCAT AR NA NÔMATAÍ DEIREANNAÇA,
 IS NÍ MÓR SUR TAOB TIAR DEM DROM É,
 MAR TÁ NA MNÁ BOCTA ANN SO CUN TÚ A SÓCRUGAD SO BINN ISTEAC
 I'D CÔMRÁIN,
 IS TÁ TU CÔM NÉATA IS SO MBEID TU AG SUIRIGE SO HÁRD AR AN
 SAOGAL EILE.

IS ÉIM A SCINN CROMTA
 IS AN SILEAD AG TUITIM Ó N-A SÚILE,
 MAR DEIR SIAD NÁ FEICEÓCAID BEAN MAR TUSA I NÓIDÁID LÉINE
 GLAINE SO BRÁT ARÍS,
 MAR NÍOR STOITIS RIBE DE GRUAIG EINNE RIAM,
 AGUS MARAR LÍON TU AN COPÁN NÍOR DOIRT TU É.

AC ÉIM AN SOLAS GORM ANOIS AG SOILLSIUGAD ORT,
 IS D'Á SÁIME A BÍOMAIR RIAM TÁ AMRAS AGAM SO MBEID TU MÍLE
 UAIR NÍOS SAIBRE SES NA GRÁSTA ANOIS,
 MAR NÍ BEID DON TOCAS AR T'AGNE CÁ BPAIGID TU DO BREASCAS
 MAIDIN DOMNAC CÁSCA.

SOCRÓCAID NA HAINGIL LEABA SÁM DUIT,
 IS NÍ GAD DUIT DON EAGLA A BEIT ORT SO SCUABPAID DON GAD AN
 STÁICÍN EORNA AS CÚINNE AN GÁIRDÍN SO BRÁT ARÍS.
 DÉANPAID MÉ FÍOGAIR NA CROISE ORT ANOIS IDIR TU FÉIN IS AN
 T-ÁIRSEOIR,
 IS DÉANPAID DIA TU D'IOMPÓD DÍREAC SE CEANN GAD DON LÁNA
 CAM ISTEAC SO DTÍ AN TALAM BEANNUIGTE STRÓINSÉARCA,
 AN AIT I BPUIL AN PÓGMAR GEARRTA IS BUAILTE
 IS AN SCIOBÓL LÍONTA SUAS SO DTÍ N-A BARRA
 LEIS AN NGRÁINNE NÁ TEIPPIR SO BRÁT.

AN IRISH PHANTASY

ONCE upon a time an Irishman went to consult a doctor.

"Doctor," he said, "ever since I was a child I have been brought up on tinned food, and all my people for generations and generations and centuries and centuries have eaten tinned food, and I don't think it has done them or me any good at all. I have constant pains in my head and legs and spasms in my stomach and lately one arm has withered. I was thinking, now that the times have changed, if I ate a cabbage grown in my own garden, a piece of mutton reared on my own hills or drank a glass of buttermilk from my own dairy I would fare better."

And the doctor replied: "There you are quite wrong. It is true you have eaten tinned food for generations—your constitution, your laws, your histories, press, literature, music, art, critical standards were canned in Britain, but you have been eating tinned food for so long, your stomach is now too weak for rough native food. What you need is international tinned stew."

And the Irishman replied: "I know that you are a very wise man. With your test tubes, blow pipes, microscope, you know what suits my system better than native instinct tested over thousands of years, in hundreds of millions of men, and in a hundred different countries. Still I think a glass of chianti and macaroni never did an Italian any harm. The Frenchman has done well on '*poulet*' and red wine, the German on sauerkraut, sausage, and beer, and our friend over the water has not fared ill on Yorkshire pudding, roast beef and a pint of bitter. Surely an Irishman could take a bit of boiled bacon and cabbage—"

"No," said the doctor. "The Irishman is different from every other man on the face of the earth. His native food is poison."

"Ever since I was a child," said the Irishman, "I have lived on rarefied air. I have been wheezing and blowing like a bellows and have had the asthma. And, indeed, all my people are wheezing and have the asthma. Do you think now that the wind has changed from the North-east to the South, a walk over my native hills or a trip to the sea, a smell of the Atlantic ozone, would be good for me?"

"No," said the doctor, "your lungs are too weak. You would fall into a decline; it would be the death of you. You need central heating. I can recommend a plant made by Dressler's

of Chicago, and you will want an apparatus for deoxygenating and dehiberniating the air. I can give you the name of an excellent firm, Popoff of Cracow."

"That's strange," said the Irishman, "I never knew that a stroll through the Viennese woods did the Austrian any harm. A ramble round Windermere was not bad for the Englishman, and the Barbizon country did the Frenchman much good. Surely a hike through the glen of Aherlow——"

"It would be fatal," said the doctor. "The Irishman is different from every other man on this earth."

"I wonder could you give me a tonic—something to pick me up. I feel low and depressed at all this news."

"Yes," said the doctor, "I have a marvellous bottle," and he went to a desk, took out a sheet of notepaper, and wrote :

Mr. Patrick Murphy,
Ballyporeen House,
Knockfierna, Co. Tipperary.

R/

Tincture of Ivan Ivanovitch	} Partes Aequales 1 oz.
Syrup of Leon Blumsky	
Pulvis Signor Spaghetti	
Infusion of Don Pacifico	
Decoction of Herr Humperdinck	
Aqueous extract of Wells ad. 8 oz.	
Fiat Mistura. Sig. One tablespoonful three times a day after tinned stew.	

SHAKE WELL.

He then went to a cupboard : poured some stuff out of large violet, indigo, blue, yellow, orange and red stock mixtures, and made up the prescription in a green bottle. He wrapped the bottle in a page torn out of a revue jaune.

"And will this bottle do me good?" asked the patient.

"Yes. You will get well and well and well, and better and better and better. You will be full of a love for humanity, and will kiss and embrace the first Kaffir or Zulu you see."

"And have you seen the prescription work well in other countries?"

"Everywhere ! Everywhere. If you take that bottle you will write music so full of melody and harmony, it will sound as if all the foghorns and steam sirens went off together. You will paint pictures of such design and balance you will turn the bottom side up and the up side down and you won't know the top from the bottom. You will build better than men have built before—great, gaunt white walls pitted with square holes.

You will write verse so that poverty of invention and the tuneless ear will be shrouded by such a cloud of verbiage, men will found academies to discover what it's all about. You will write prose so simple and so clear posterity will say the professors of Lagado left off extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers and took to shaking words out of pepper canisters."

"It must be a wonderful bottle entirely," said the Irishman.

"It is all that," said the doctor. "It is a world-wide wonder."

Having heard of this miraculous cure from my friend Mr. Murphy, I decided I would be a fool to stay in Ireland, when I could go abroad and sip the nectar at its source, and eat undefiled this pure manna, the new food of the gods. I shut up my house and took a single ticket for the Continent.

Years and years passed. The Cosmopolitan friends of liberty, equality, fraternity and international tinned stew, were exchanging fraternal greetings for the last time. Twenty million lay locked in amicable embrace—a confused riot of whiskers, legs, fists, arms, teeth, ears, and nails. Millions lay dead on the ground:—Bolsheviks, Anarchists, Aryans, Teutons, Nordics, Yogis, Brahmins, Mussulmans, Senegalese, Afghans, Moors, Pathans, Greeks, Punjaubis, Mahrattis, Spaniards, French, Spahis, Germans, Italians, Semites, anti-Semites, Revisionists, Anti-revisionists, English, Rooshians. The sky was red with blazing cities lighting the path to Europe's second Dark Age.

And over in Geneva the international faddists were still eating tinned stew, exploring every avenue, leaving no stone unturned to help humanity on and on and on and up and up and up the arduous path of Progress.

My head was on fire. My heart ached. I decided to turn my back on "civilisation" and to return to Ireland, the Gothic night and the Middle Ages.

Arrived in Dublin I drove straight to the heart of the country. I stopped at a village pub I knew in the days of old. The place was changed. The yard where you would sink up to your ankles in puddle was clean and freshly cobbled. The Guinness showcard, littered with dead flies, had gone from the dusty window. In a neat verandah a few villagers sat lazily chatting. I entered and found the house transformed.

The confused litter of bacon, rancid butter, indian meal, and sugar was now trim and tidy. In a spacious room with chairs and tables and newspapers I noticed in one corner three or four playing halfpenny forty-five; a couple were throwing

darts, and in a corner four old men at a draught board were as wrapt in the fate of the wooden pieces, as the wise men at Geneva in the uplift of humanity. I called for a glass of beer and fell into that vacuous thought so common in the country, so different from the profound reverie of those who pass their days dodging motor cars or side-stepping charabancs for their lives. I went up to the four old peasants at the draught board, and to one I said:

"Do you know at all how miserable and unhappy you are?" He seemed confused and did not answer.

I asked another:

"Are you aware that thirty millions are fighting on the Continent to lift you and the likes of you up from this trough of iniquity?" He was, amazed.

I turned to the third: "Are you aware you are pictured in our national literature as a cross between a levantine peddler, a cretin, and an Albanian brigand?"—he was dumb; and turning to the fourth, an old fellow with a dry, weatherbeaten, wizened face, I told him he was three hundred years behind the times. He laughed outright and with a grin said he might be none the worse for that; perhaps he was a few hundred years nearer happiness.

Confused I went into the street. The village cobbler sat on a chair in front of his house rasping an old tune on an old fiddle. A woman, hanging clothes, was keening a plaintive song. Leaning over a half-door a lad of twelve, playing on a flute watched four children stepping some rustic primitive dance; of a certain rhythm and beauty no doubt but nothing so refined as the precious rumbas I had left behind me on the Continent. At the end of the village a rustic Michael Angelo was carving a Madonna with a penknife out of a block of timber from the grove over the way.

It was summertime. The sun had near set but men, women and children were working in the fields, piking the hay and gathering the corn into stooks.

From far away over the silent eventide came the chime of bells and the pure, clear notes of a boy chorister, and in under harmonies a rich bass and the rough tones of men.

I saw arise in the distance a chaste spire and small country chapel, and there shone through the windows a symphony of coloured lights—blues, orange, green, sapphire, red, and in the near coming light I seemed to pick out in rich, many coloured raiment, Columba and Patrick and ancient heroes of our legends.

I entered the church. In my youth there was here a larger

barn, the damp dripping walls plastered with German oleographs and on the altars half-a-dozen statues gathered from the factories of Europe.

And now on the walls were stations carved out of native wood, The same symbolic scenes carved by a hundred artists for thousands of churches in many lands, but yet somehow I thought these were different from any I had seen in this country or in Europe. In fact, the Roman soldiers might have been the men I saw in the fields, and Calvary itself might have been Knockfierna.

So, too, it was with the pictures in oil and the statues I saw. All were originals. Patrick himself looked like an Irishman and Brigid and the Madonna and child—why, I thought, I had seen them all before in a hundred Irish villages and streets.

I came out and walked along the road scarce heeding where I went. I must have walked a mile or more when I saw shining through a grove a pale light. And then I remembered suddenly this was Ballyporeen House, the home of my old friend. A deep sadness came on me. How would I find Pat Murphy? Still wheezing, the pains in his head, the spasm in his stomach? Sad thought of all had he gone native, his mind deranged, would I find him chasing butterflies in a haggard, or leaning against a dunhill gazing vacantly at the ruins of a round tower?

I passed through the gate and as I went up the avenue I heard the tinkle tones of a piano. A child was playing. The music was in simple sonata form reminiscent of the Corelli or Scarlatti of our youth; and yet somehow here and there—it may have been a quaint interval, a mode, some vague turn of colour or melody—I thought that there was something peculiar in the music, that the boy who played the flute might have written the sonata, or the old cobbler with his fiddle was not born very far away from the land that bore the music.

I knocked. I remembered many years ago there were two coloured prints in the hall—a princess leaning over a balcony bidding farewell to a cavalier, a lady feeding swans on a lake in front of a stately mansion. They were Christmas supplements of an illustrated English weekly journal.

The door was opened. To-day I noticed four pictures, in oil and water colour. And whether it was the little white stone walls, the thatched cottage, the blue of the hills, the green of the fields, the harvesters in the field, or the long lank fishermen in waistcoats, somehow or other all of them were of this land of ours and of our land alone.

I sat down in a room while the maid went to announce my

arrival. On the table and on a shelf I noticed magazines and books. Many of the books bore the imprint of an Irish publisher and the magazines were printed here, too. I thought how strange it was that a people who produced the Book of Kells eight hundred years since, who were the schoolmasters of Europe thirteen hundred years ago, even now at last were printing their own periodic and cultural reviews and publishing their own books.

And then came the great trial. I passed to an adjoining room. My old friend sprang up to receive me. He grasped me with such warmth, my hand ached. "He had been up Knockfierna with the dogs," he said, "and was just having a bit of supper."

I looked anxiously at him. There was in his face the flush of new life, and in his eye such a soft colour as one may sometime see in the iris of a country child struggling with a juicy bone.

I glanced at the meal. *There was no tinned stew!* "What!" I cried, in horror, "you have forgotten the doctor's orders."

He laughed with such gusto the plates rattled on the table.

"Yes," he replied. "Anyone who likes can have international tinned stew. But a bit of boiled bacon and cabbage, a few potatoes in their jackets and a good glass of Irish whiskey never did a good Irishman any harm."

JAMES DEVANE

CHILDREN

"No, no; you'll not be the grandmother. I'll be the grandmother. Won't I, Pidgie?"

"Well I'll be the woman with the green shawl so," Maggie said.

"That was his wife."

"Whose wife?"

"The man who was dead. Who else?"

"And what'll I be, Pidgie?"

"Do ye remember the old one was taking her snuff? 'The Will of God be done,' she was saying. Do you remember her?"

"But what about me? I have no one."

Pidgie settled that, too: "You'll be the old man who had his handkerchief in his hat—see now?"

"But what'll I be saying? I don't know what he was saying."

"That's always the way with you. Because you always have someone by the tail. You don't know nothing. You must be holding out the hat in your left hand and catching hold of everyone with the other hand, and saying: 'When is the funeral leaving, Ma'am? Oh my?'"

"That's easy, anyway. 'When is the funeral——'"

"No, that's not it. Look up in their faces. Open your eyes and look up at them. Wider. Wider, can't you? Begging like. 'When is the funeral leaving——'"

"And what about the one had her hair down, and her blouse all open? And her face! Did you see her face? All *white*!"

"That was his sister. You don't know nothing either."

"And what was she saying—the white one?"

"I know," said Mamie, "Um, um, blimely end."

"You fool!"

"That's what I heard, anyway."

"Um, um, blimely end."

They laughed at Pidgie's mimicry.

"What was it so? You don't know yourself and you're laughing at me."

"'Untimely end,' she was saying. 'What else?'"

"And what's untimely end?"

"Because she starved him."

"Who?"

"His wife. The one with the green shawl."

"Oh!"

"And why didn't she answer her?"

"Didn't you see the old one with the snuff holding her back? Wasn't chalky-face only looking for fight? What else?"

"And what made her starve him?"

"She didn't starve him at all, you goose. Starve him, I'd like to see her. Sure they always say that."

"God, he was looking awful. I'll never go to a wake again."

"You said that the last time too."

"Well, I won't. You'd think he was listening. Didn't I see him all night!"

"And hale and sound you left your mother's house."

"What's that?"

"That's what she was saying. 'Untimely end. Untimely end. And hale and sound——'"

"We'll begin now. I'll be the old granny."

"Well, fool about. 'Is it my poor man is dead or the little one? Is it my——'"

"You now, Maggie."

"'Untimely end. Untimely end; and safe——'"

"Liz, you now."

"What is it? Oh, I know. 'When is the funeral leaving, Ma'am? Oh my! When——'"

"Now, Andy; you stretch out."

"I won't."

"You'll have to. How can we have a wake without a corpse. Now, no laughing out of ye. No one is to laugh. Only very mournful. Mournful. You're to be crying. Begin now."

From the next room came their mother's voice: "Be quiet, I'm telling ye. Is it rouse up the child ye will?"

She was about to go in to them when she was aware that Mrs. Deeling from the floor above had entered. She had stolen in quietly, as if she had come from a quiet place. Mrs. Buttimer, speaking in a low voice, said:

"How is she to-day?"

"Grand then. Grand. As happy as Larry."

"You have your hands full with her. She can't hold out much longer. God knows they're a great trial when they're so old."

"Wisha, there's no one hastening her out. I'll miss her when she goes, for all her figaries."

"Sure you'd miss an old chair."

"I don't mind at all only when I wake up in the night and not a stir in the house."

Mrs. Buttimer tapped at the door of the room where the children were having their wake. The voices quieted.

"In the middle of the night when there's not a stir, only herself gabbling away. To her little brother she do be speaking, and he dead this seventy years! 'Dont' go near that one. She'll pick you.'"

"Who'd pick him?"

"Some old goose they had. And you know she says it like this: 'Johnny! Johnny! Keep away. Keep away, Johnny. She'll pick you.' God knows, Mrs. B. you'd take your oath she had him by the hand."

"My!"

"Listening to her and I trying not to listen—that's the way with me. And the whole world asleep!"

"'Twould be worse if the poor old thing was in pain."

"That's true, too."

"'Tis thankful to God you ought to be."

"And I am; but 'tis cruel lonesome, I'm telling you; and some night I'll break down."

"You won't, then."

"What was she doing and I coming down, do you think? Picking flowers!"

"My!"

"To hear the little old voice of her! Like a little bird. 'Here's a lovely one, now' Wait, now, and I'll get them red primroses. Wait now.'"

"'Tis wonderful to have her so kind."

"Do you know what I said to her? 'If it's flowers you want, you'll have to travel a mile or two from Coley's Lane, Ma'am.' She only looked at me. You'd think she never heard the name!"

"'Tis wonderful. Do you know, Mrs. Deeling, I never spent a whole day in the country. A real day: waking up, and eating, and lying down. Never."

"No? Oh, when I married himself first I used often to go down to the old woman's house in Caherlag. That's why I'm lonesome when she begins to ramble about it. It comes back to me: the little stream, everything."

In spite of the closed door the children's voices came into the room. Mrs. Buttimer said:

"Wouldn't they annoy you. They'll rouse him on me."

"They won't, then. I'm watching him. Look, he's laughing. 'Tis something in his mind."

"I often see him laughing like that."

The voices in the other room were strengthening :
"Untimely end !" "Untimely end." "When is the funeral leaving, Ma'am ? Oh my !" "You starved him." So Mrs. Buttimer had to tap again at the door ; and again the wailing hub-bub quieted. Mrs. Deeling was bending above the cradle, she said :

"Laughing away for himself. And look at the fist of him ! 'Tisn't picking flowers he is, I tell you. But I'm better go up and see what the child above is at."

She turned to Mrs. Buttimer.

"Do you know, 'tis queer, when you think of it. That poor child of mine—if ever a woman had to struggle and to fight her way through the sorrows and troubles of this world, 'twas that poor thing above in the bed. Sickness and sorrow and death and hunger. And there she is now, picking flowers for herself in the fields !"

"'Tis blest you are. Do you hear them inside ?"

Mrs. Deeling said :

"If she's after dropping off I'll come down again."

"Do then."

Mrs. Deeling went out quietly, as if going to a quiet place ; and Mrs. Buttimer, her head a little on one side, looked down on the face of the child, radiant in his dreams. She looked down on it long and steadily, thinking of nothing, too happy to think of anything. In spite of the hub-bub in the next room, the whole house, the whole world, to her seemed to be quite still.

DANIEL CORKERY

DEATH COMES TO JOHN MELDRIM

JOHN MELDRIM sensed a heaviness on the people. Something important had happened. The men stood in whispering knots. The women slunk sure-footedly into the chapel, their eyes aslant under furtive shawls. There were hardly any young people at the gate, but that was because the First Sunday had brought the youthful to First Mass, to the rails. The air was heavy like before lightning. But he hadn't stopped. He always either left the trap in the town, walked up the hill and straight on into his seat in the gallery or else walked the whole three miles and wouldn't make little of himself after it by lounging in the yard to gossip. In any case he would be barely in his seat as the priest came out on the altar.

Inside the chapel, he sat down, pleased after the three miles to have beaten the priest by about half a minute. It was the Canon. John Meldrim thought, "The Canon and me are the same age. When he goes it will be time for me to pack my traps. Still he stands it well for seventy." The Canon organed out the Prayers Before Mass, and John thought, "I'm good for another ten," before the sounding words brought him back with a start. He began to think about God and about himself, but he got lost, and decided to join in the prayers. God was good. No priests in our family, unless you count a second cousin—

—"for those that are in high station, that they may lead quiet and holy lives, for peace and good will among all states and peoples—"

His eye kept wandering round at intervals during the Mass. The Mullaslin people were down there at the Virgin's altar. They always went to the same place. He wouldn't know one out of every three of them now. He and Maggie must go down some Sunday to see Maggie's Aunt. She might die any day.

The Mass was over, but he stayed a while on his knees. Then he came out. He generally allowed himself five minutes "shanagh" after coming out. Was that Davy Bradley? What could the news be? The silence before Mass had changed to a hum, a sullen hiss of angry bees. He joined David, and the fearful thing struck him like a blow. Oh, God, it couldn't be. Nonsense. But it was. Everyone had it. Surely some one would get up and shriek that it wasn't true. Women slipped away in little clusters. Their shawls were black and brown and grey.

The greys and browns had zig-zag bands of bright embroidery before the tassels. The few children went home quietly in ones and twos. They hardly threw a stone, under the knowledge that terror was abroad. John Meldrim hadn't the heart to call by the town. He went down Malawee bray, and came out at the Doctor's. Davy Bradley whinged, "The country will be destroyed. Oh, it's bad work, it's bad work." He wished to God he hadn't come with Bradley. If he could get in with somebody, some steady body, and talk it over. Oh, if he could only think, think. How would he face them at home? He left Bradley at the railway, and walked up the line, coming in by the garden.

"Who had you at Second Mass, Father?"

"The Canon."

"You got away early. We had Father MacCrory. He was praying for good weather for the spring."

God, the spring! The ground had opened under his feet, under their feet, and they didn't know it. He sat down to his dinner. The Sunday dinner was silent. There was to be a convoy in Charlie Neilly's. Maggie would like to go.

After dinner he felt a little better. He fidgeted round the yard, put up the horse's yoke, tied up and cleared away an old fishing rod into the loft, put the pigs trough back in the sty.

"I think I'll go down to MacKernans for a plug of tobacco," he announced. MacKernan might know something. People were always in and out. He took his stick. He couldn't find it this morning going to the chapel, and now there it was.

It isn't true. It can't be true. God wouldn't allow it. It wouldn't be good that God would destroy the people. He stopped short. He had neared blasphemy. "Blessed be Thy Holy Will." But could it be?

The panorama of his life arose before him. How many years since his father died? Thirty-eight, thirty-nine. Thirty-nine years come Easter he was left with the house, and the stubborn bit of land. Who had worked if he hadn't? He had wrung the sixpences and the pennies, and the very halfpennies out of the two bits of fields. Hard. The fields had nearly beaten him. And then they began to make the new road. Why, from here to MacKernans was his road. His sweat, his very blood was in it. The road money had given him enough to marry. And then came the railroad. He would go down there in the evening and think it out. He loved that railroad. One Sunday, twenty years ago, he had walked along and nicked his mark on every sleeper from here to the bridge. No one knew that but himself. Mick came, and then Francis, and then Rose. A while after that

Bella. Then John. Then Peter and Luke, and last of all, Maggie. He wasn't made a gaffer. He could have mastered the men well enough, but he was just as glad to be one of themselves. The railway money gave him a chance as the boys grew up to try the contracting for the roads. Every one of them was a good worker. He liked John the best. It had been a hard blow when John cut his finger on a piece of timber at the station and died in three days. John's mother died the same week. God's will be done. Twenty years on the roads, and hard, skilful farming left him with near a thousand pounds, and the two meadows on the far side of the railway. Only last night he had said after the Rosary, "Tuesday's Shrove, and all's well." The boys had left him as they grew into men. Mick ran away to the police, but he was doing well now since he married that Sligo woman. Last summer when he was home on his holidays he hadn't touched a drop. Francis was on the railway, and might be made a signalman any day. Peter was teaching. £40 a year wasn't a lot, but it would improve, and in the meantime he was worth a hundred more at home. Rose got £200 with her to MacElhone in Pomeroy, and her three children would please you. Bella would get her £200, and Maggie the same, but he hoped Maggie wouldn't marry yet for a long time. Luke would have the place and bring a woman in, but he would be time enough after Maggie left.

God of Heaven! Could it be? Banks didn't break, Quin's Bank, anyway. Why he was talking to the Manager in Tearmann the last fair day—a man of farming stock, from Drumquin he was. He knew nearly as much about the price of pigs and cattle as John Meldrim himself. And Quin's were big people, and dealt big. They weren't dependent on the Bank. Weren't there Frenchmen over last year the time of the war buying horses from them? Sure he made money himself on that war—near a hundred pounds. If it had lasted a couple of years instead of only a couple of months or so he could nearly call himself a rich man. Enough horses for ten armies, they said. Then a horrible thought clutched him in the heart. The war?—the Frenchmen?—, but he shook it off.

Would MacKernan have any news?

"An ounce of tobacco, Paddy."

"Good evening, Mr. Meldrim. A right day."

"Aye."

Would MacKernan be wondering how much he lost? He went on:

"This is bad news I hear in the town."

"Oh, now. The country will be destroyed."

"You heard no word? I mean, nothing beyond what they're saying?"

"There was a policeman here after poachers this morning, and the new sergeant had the word to Tearmann yesterday from Dungannon. It seems Quins sold a lair of horses to the Frenchmen and couldn't get paid for them. The French lost the war, you know. He said a clatter of people came into Dungannon yesterday with picks and crowbars to break open the Bank. God look to their wit, the creatures."

John Meldrim didn't wait. It was true then. Why in under God couldn't people be at peace and mind their business? He was glad he met no one on the road home. He would rather tell them himself.

He told them, first Francis, and then the family. Maggie was frightened like a child, and he was sorry for her. She knew he had his money in Quins, but she didn't know how much. She wouldn't have her £200 now, and she wouldn't make the good match he wanted for her. He must pull himself together.

He questioned Francis about the plough and the seed. Everything was ready for the spring. But still he must see for himself. They'd have to start early to-morrow. He must work harder. He had taken it easy these last years, with the age coming on him. How long would it take to make a thousand pounds? A thousand pounds, with ten years to go. It couldn't be done, but he could make five hundred.

John Meldrim had the soul of an artist, and he had in him a core of greatness. If an earthquake had suddenly shattered the dome of St. Peter's, Michael Angelo would have stooped to build again laboriously.

To-morrow, work. Thank God, he was still a strong man. Sleep the night and labour the day, and there might still be time.

He slept that night, lying like a child. At six he was up and about. Breakfast—porridge and a cup of tea. Francis went out to yoke. Maggie came in from the hens. John Meldrim put up his hands. He felt his braces tight. He staggered and caught the wall. Maggie ran over. "Father?" He was impatient. Why did she fuss? It would pass. Then his head went round, and he fell into her arms. "Father, I'll help you down to the bed." He leaned against her, and gained painfully the bed in the room. "I'm done," he thought.

He lay back. "I'm alright, Maggie. Give me my beads, and

tell Francis to come in." No ploughing, and the horse yoked. "You take the trap, Maggie, and go for the priest."

Maggie looked at him anxiously, and went into the lower room to call them first. Then she went out to Francis. When Francis came in, she put the pony into the trap and headed him towards the town. Once she got on the level beyond the station she broke him to a gallop. Surely, surely, he wasn't going lame?—at such a time!

She met the Canon on the doorstep.

"Oh, Canon, my father, John Meldrim. You're wanted, quick."

"What's wrong, my decent girl?"

"A stroke, Canon. He got a stroke after he got up this morning."

"Right, my decent girl. I have a wedding mass to say, and after that I'll be over."

"Oh, Canon. You'll hurry." Maggie stood aghast at her own temerity.

The Canon had turned away, and he rounded sharply on his heel. He looked at her and saw there the child he had christened twenty-one years before. He visioned her father's rugged honest face as he had held her at the font, and a sudden tenderness inspired him.

"Maggie" (he had never before addressed her as other than "my decent girl" or "Maggie Meldrim"), "you can take this from me: *John Meldrim's not going to die without the priest.* You'll be calling in the town, I suppose. Make whatever wee purchases ye have to make, and maybe, I'll be there before you."

"Oh, Canon," was all that Maggie could sob.

The Canon came at nine. He tied his horse to the doorpost—a warning to visitors to keep away for the present. He stayed an hour.

"I'll be back on Wednesday or Thursday if there's no news," he said, as he rode away. "I think he'll maybe get over it."

After the Canon left, John Meldrim felt much better. But he knew he was done. Thank God, the business of Eternity was over. But Time was still in arrears. He gave directions from his bed. The bed became the calm unhurried headquarters of a Von Moltke. The ploughing ought to be finished by Wednesday week. The seed in the big bags was for the far meadow. The harrow would need a couple of new pins. The two heifers might be taken to next Tearmann fair. One of them had a limp. Francis would have to get a thatcher after the harvest. There was a wee bill in MacKernan's, but that

could run on. They would be getting tea and sugar there for the wake, anyway. There was something else he had a mind to do. What's this it was? If he could only think. Oh, aye, surely.

"Maggie." He tapped with the stick, and Maggie ran down silently.

"Maggie, I mightn't mind, so you'll tell Francis when he comes in to get the wee pony shod. If I had 'a' had my way it would have been shod last week, and you wouldn't have to be going to the neighbours for a beast to look decent when you're bringing me over to Tearmann on Wednesday or Thursday."

"Yes, Father," Maggie sobbed.

"And let you all kneel down and say your Rosary."

"Yes, Father."

The Rosary was over. Maggie tiptoed to the room.

"Father! Father!"

But John Meldrim was gone to where treasure moth doth not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

W. WEAVER

LETTER OF THE MONTH

HOW DOES SHE STAND ?

" Oh, I met with Napper Tandy, and he took me by the hand,

And says he, ' How's dear old Ireland, and how does she stand ? ' "

NAPPER TANDY'S crisp interrogation should be recognised officially as the original Irish Question ; for it imparted to Ireland a valetudinarian news-value out of all proportion to its ailments. The country is still an object of puzzled concern, in spite of the fact that it has been repeatedly explained by visiting political journalists and sundry itinerant scribblers. A sort of bewildered anxiety about Irish affairs is particularly evident in England, where the newspapers turn every scuffle in Cathal Brugha Street into a *coup d'état* and the public has not achieved that complete distrust of the Press which is second nature to an Irish countryman.

While duly flattered at the astonishing amount of publicity our country has achieved, it is well to keep in mind that all publicity involves a certain distortion of values. Too many writers about Ireland are attracted by the trivial, the artificial, the non-indigenous ; and there is the danger that their approach may become the accepted one. Ireland, a hot-bed of histrionic talent, might be tempted to act down to her reputation.

That such a contingency is, fortunately, improbable seems to be indicated by two articles which appeared in the April issue of IRELAND TO-DAY—*Ireland in the European Chaos*, by Professor Tierney, and *The Unpopular Front*, by Edward Sheehy. Both contributions aimed at clarifying the issues—ethical and social—which are of real moment in present-day Ireland, and their publication was a heartening phenomenon. Intelligent Irishmen, perhaps for the first time, are asking : *How does she stand ?*

* * *

The question might be answered in a number of ways, the reproduction of statistics being, perhaps, the only method not liable to provoke controversy. But statistics are notoriously misleading. On the whole, it may be better to start, literally, at rock-bottom.

At school our geography-books told us that Ireland was on the Continental Shelf, and the truth of this assertion may be confirmed by a glance at any European newspaper. But the tremendous implications of our geological situation are not

generally realised. For that meagre bit of information from our school-books, carefully pondered, explains everything—including Irish history and the bewilderment of foreign observers.

The strategic importance of our position on the submarine outcrop of Europe is immense. It provides us with all the proverbial advantages of the hurler on the ditch. We are in Europe but not completely of it; influenced by the cultural tradition of the Continent without suffering the disability of being a modern European nation. This being so, it is to be expected that Ireland would be in a position to select her influences, to accept only those Continental tendencies and movements which are akin to her own genius. This has been demonstrated by the feeble influence here of the Renaissance, that vastly over-praised caprice; and even more strikingly by the complete failure to impose the Reformation.

This ambiguous position is one that should be exploited to our cultural and material advantage, and there is evidence that the Irish people have the instinct to exploit it. It is significant that the opposed ideologies of contemporary Europe are negligible factors here in Ireland. Perhaps the apathy bred of our semi-isolation is saving us from "the destructive friendship of Fascism and the destructive enmity of Communism." This apathy extends to the whole political spectacle on the Continent. Perhaps the only notable reaction here to the impending European holocaust is the quiet optimism of the farmers.

* * *

Mention of the philosophic farmers brings us inevitably to those "matters outstanding between His Majesty's Government and the Government of the Irish Free State," which are a recurrent topic at Westminster. Our attitude to England in the likely event of that country being involved in another World War is something that demands consideration.

It was once a sound working hypothesis that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity, but a lot of bridges have gone under the water since then; and England is now too busy elsewhere to sustain her rôle as traditional enemy of the Irish race. To-day England is the least of our enemies, and—with her own interests in view—might be a valuable friend. There is at least one common interest—an anxiety to maintain the dignity and worth of the individual human being. We in Ireland should cling to it as a religious doctrine; England upholds it as a political ideal.

It is being realised gradually that—as things stand in Europe to-day—Ireland must find in England a more sympathetic

neighbour than can be found elsewhere. Our supposed affinity with the French is a myth, and has not been strengthened by their long sojourn within our territorial waters—always late with military assistance, but in time to steal our lobster-pots. The abyss of temperament which separates us from the Teutons is even greater, and some of us who prayed for Germany to win the war are gratefully acknowledging that the devil you know is incomparably better than the devil you wanted to be introduced to.

For England—though we have no reason to be grateful to her—did confer some benefits on us, in her perverse blundering way. At least one legacy of the Conquest is becoming increasingly valuable in this age of standardisation and Fascism. The British Administration here exaggerated our natural distrust of law and order into a healthy horror of regimentation. Under an alien government Irishmen broke the law through force of habit; and habit has, of course, weakened but there is still a tendency to disregard the law when necessary—perhaps a survival of the obsolete doctrine that laws are intended to simplify existence.

* * *

Another of England's gifts to us was her language, which we accepted reluctantly and made completely our own. Ireland always eats the cake and keeps it—preferably someone else's cake. In fact, we are still looking this gift Pegasus in the mouth. But the slow progress being made in the subsidised ousting of the language proves that English is too intimately established in Irish life and thought to be easily surrendered. To-day it supplies Irish writers with a medium of far wider appeal than Gaelic could ever have become. The result has been a virtual monopoly of contemporary English literature by Irish authors. The English forced upon us their rich and widespread language—and in return we have given Bernard Shaw, who teaches them how to pronounce it.

The important point is that Ireland, accepting the English language, has yet preserved an extraordinary measure of cultural identity. The language has been so completely adapted to our uses that it has become indigenous. Now that the revival of Gaelic has become a lucrative trade, the bogey of Anglicisation is being widely canvassed. But it must be evident to unprejudiced observers that the panic is either groundless or belated; for the English-speaking portion of Ireland preserves characteristics of thought and outlook absolutely unaffected by English influences.

Since the English-speaking people of Ireland are in an overwhelming majority, it follows that their characteristics are more representative of Ireland than those of the Gaelic-speaking minority. It is a fact, and no mere paradox, that the real Irish are the English-speaking majority in this country. The truth of this is borne out, in a negative sense, by the atmosphere which surrounds the current effort to revive Gaelic. Yeats, in his *Dramatis Personae*, tells how Thomas MacDonagh said that the Gaelic League was killing everything that was good in Irish culture. The remark proved MacDonagh prophet as well as poet. The current professional revival of Gaelic culture is characterised by a humourless Calvinistic bigotry that is completely un-Irish. All those who cherish Irish for the culture it enshrined are being gradually antagonised by the methods of the Revivalists.

* * *

The character which the Revival is assuming is by no means representative of the finer elements indigenous to this country. It is Ireland's misfortune to be always inadequately—if not falsely—represented in her public manifestations. No student of American municipal politics will deny the Irish genius for organisation, but here in Ireland our collective manifestations are sadly incomplete ; unworthy symbols of the social and human factors which have produced them. These symbols are accepted, not merely at their face-value, but as criterions of merit in the spheres of morality and patriotism. The Gaelic League—killing, as MacDonagh perceived, everything that is worthy in Gaelic Culture—is tolerated as a mouthpiece of public opinion. The tolerance is probably due to lack of public interest, as would seem to be indicated by the parlous state of the League's finances. The intolerance and bigotry displayed by its leaders have alienated the sympathy of all those to whom the language is not a trade.

Devotion to meretricious emblems is imposed upon us by a sort of hypnotism. The trite statement that politics is the curse of the country expresses the truth that our political parties are inappropriate symbols of our social and cultural aspirations. And how disappointing an assembly the Dáil is in a country of chronic orators ! The rich, tolerant humour of Irish life is continually warped by an auto-suggested devotion to abstractions, and only finds complete expression in a casual gregariousness—as at a fair, a wake, a race-meeting or a card school. And that casual expression is a sign-post to the real Ireland, an Ireland without representation, a vast repository of thought

and feeling—incapable of being mobilised into any “movement,” Organisation or Party. To those of us who are genuinely interested in the country’s future the phrase “love of Ireland” has no meaning, except in relation to this amorphous, incommensurable Ireland which no Party has made its concern. One does not love an abstraction or a geographical unit ; only people and places.

* * *

People and places—the ingredients of life and history. Here is a race, notoriously gifted, endowed with qualities of mind and spirit which make the business of living gay, adventurous and stimulating. Here is a country abundantly blessed by nature, producing the world’s best horses, whisky, greyhounds, porter, wrestlers and writers. Surely happiness and prosperity should be ours, if the politicians did not keep it perpetually around the corner. It will not be by ballot-papers that the people of Ireland will determine the country’s future, but by preserving—perhaps unconsciously—our distinctive way of life and thought, which has nothing to do with politics and quite a lot to do with horses and greyhounds and porter.

Politically, our immediate policy should be unanimous—to keep absolutely clear of the coming European slaughter. Ireland’s uniquely ambiguous position gives unlimited scope to the national talent for eating the cake and keeping it ; by keeping a careful but unfevered eye on the contemporary situation we may get both instruction and profit. The farmers—quick to apprehend teleological implications—are patiently and confidently awaiting the day when a well-finished beast will fetch £60. England’s difficulty will this time be Ireland’s destiny.

Ireland will at last have found herself, disentangled herself from her innumerable aliases. Prosperity has a liberating effect on personality and a prosperous Ireland will inevitably emphasise those characteristics most typical of the Irish genius. The result should be interesting, though perhaps discomfiting to professional patriots. A well-fed farmer in the stand at Fairy-house may prove to be a truer Gael than a fisherman speaking subsidised Irish.

NIALL SHERIDAN

ART

MAINLY MCGONAGIL

Although the hundred and eighth exhibition of the Academy will have closed before these notes are printed, the temptation to supplement Mr. Sheehy's admirable review of last month is irresistible. The public displayed an unprecedented interest in this crowning function of the artistic year; one of our daily papers, the *Irish Times*, published no less than four different articles on the exhibition and proof that Art has achieved an unwonted (and possibly not altogether aesthetic) importance in this country is afforded by the entry into the ranks of the commentators of Dublin's Lord Mayor, who has contributed the weighty pronouncement that the Academy is "100 per cent. better than it was three years ago," a verdict which may be descriced as the purest tosh, for the increased interest on the part of the public is not reflected in the standard of the works shown. The hungry sheep look up, in fact, and are not fed. And the Academy is, by the addition of so many unprofitable years of age without growth, exactly in that proportion more dreary, stale and flat than it was three, or thirteen, or thirty years ago.

It was remarked here, last year, that most of the older exhibitors seemed to be painting in the exact manner of twenty years ago and that opinion is confirmed by the present collection. With a few exceptions one could have foretold not alone the standard but almost the subjects to expect from each artist. That is not intended to imply that an artist has not a right to have a special leaning for a particular kind of painting, but there can be no excuse for the pictorial cliché, and some Irish art seems to have frozen into a mould. It has jelled.

Ten or twelve years ago a series of articles by a very bumptious critic, on the contemporary exhibition at the Academy, appeared in a Dublin weekly. The writer's pen was regretablely charged with vitriol (now changed to the milk of human kindness), but although his strictures on Irish art were unduly caustic, they seem, in retrospect, to have contained a large element of truth. To take one example, in that series of a dozen years ago the critic remarked on the cloud formation in a certain artist's landscapes, and pointed out that they arose full blown from the horizon and mounted straight into the zenith. As clouds travel parallel to the earth they are stratified in perspective as they approach the horizon, and this artist's rendering gives a strange, though not unpleasing, sense of unreality, as if the horizon were a wall and a giant were behind it, blowing bubbles. Done once, this might be a legitimate distortion of nature to produce a particular emotion, but the clouds which were criticised twelve years ago are still behaving, in the same artist's pictures, in the same unrestrained fashion, and a happy inspiration has become a pictorial cliché. There are other clichés in this man's work, such as mountains of a uniform tone from summit to base, like gigantic precipices, which give a feeling of awe and solemnity, but which become a little boring on such endless

repetition. This man can handle paint as few other Irish artists can. In particular his treatment of edges, often the painter's agony, is a delight. But from some cause which the uncharitable might mistake for a fatal indolence, shared by half a dozen others, he is like a musician with mastery of a full orchestra who has elected to confine himself to the tin whistle. He has been selected as an illustration because of his naturally great gifts and because, among the exhibitors, he, perhaps, can best afford to be criticised. It has not been my fortune to see this painter in any except this hackneyed mood, but I am informed that when he forsakes it he can abandon these mannerisms and astonish us with his genius.

The same failing, much exaggerated, is visible in a surprising number of his colleagues. It is as if from endless production of a particular type of picture, a veil had fallen between them and nature and they were no longer truly able to see. A recognisable approximation of nature is produced, but, a Christmas card or grocer's calendar is quite a recognisable approximation of nature also, and the difference is only one of degree. These artists have become merely casual or superficial observers, and gone is that fine intensity of vision, or feeling, without which art flourishes not. The little more and how much it is, and the little less and what worlds away. If anyone will take the trouble to study such a picture as "The Village Roadway," by Harpignies, in the Dublin Municipal Gallery, he will hardly fail to see the difference between an emotion simply and deeply felt and the meretricious sentimentality which provides our art critics with such appropriate phrases as "warm, sunny effects."

That "little more" is, indeed, hard to find at the Academy. Deliberately ignoring those places where he was reasonably sure of finding it, your reviewer wandered from wall to wall and whether as a result of auto-suggestion or not, believes he finally located some evidence of it in a very badly hung picture by one Moira Barry, of a bridge on the Grand Canal. Examination of the rest of Miss Barry's work revealed competently painted rhododendrons and a few yachts riding at anchor on a grey sea, which hardly fulfilled, but did not altogether belie, the promise of No. 75. Nor did the English quota raise one's spirits. More efficient in technique than the Irish average, it is equally dull, with one brilliant exception, "The Toilet," by Harold Harvey, an exquisite and tender study of a young woman before a mirror, which, both in modelling and painting, is superb.

In reviewing last year's exhibition I remarked that almost alone among Irish artists Maurice McGonagil, R.H.A., showed continuous progression in his work and if proof of this is needed it is here this year. His picture of "The Servant Girl" and his interior of "Davy Byrne's Pub" are head and shoulders over anything else in the Gallery, while his landscapes show a similar development—a development which is amazing in a well-established Academician. To reflect merely on the subjects chosen by McGonagil is to realise his freedom from the dreadful coma which to-day enervates Irish art. Last year he exhibited a couple of remarkable portraits, an interior of the Olympia Theatre

with comedians in limelight on the stage, a daylight interior of a studio containing half a dozen portraits, and several fine landscapes. With Mr. McGonagil we are a wholesome distance from the repetition worker, we can feel the presence of a courage which is not afraid to break new ground or tackle any problem in technique, and a penetrating eye which sees a deal more in nature than "warm, sunny effects" or the like.

Mr. Sheehy observed last month that McGonagil's work, because of its very adventurousness, showed a certain unevenness. While I agree that this is shrewd criticism it must be obvious that the unevenness would not be there if this artist were content to remain where he was five or six years ago, in a state of arrested development. He might still be turning out, for example, a certain type of landscape then associated with his name. He would be getting his regular write-up in our daily Press, rounded off with a kindly pat on the back. Everyone would know what to expect, everyone would be happy and no one would know what Irish art had lost. That unevenness is growing less every year, as the artist's mastery of his craft gradually overtakes his conceptions, and if any of it is still apparent in this year, 1937, it does not in the least shake his position of pre-eminence in the Academy.

In his picture of "The Servant Girl" I can see no unevenness. True, the colour harmony is not the conventional one of a tint balanced against its opposite, with two discords and a mathematical area of neutral, but may we not be thankful to be spared that? And quite apart from the masterly drawing and painting, or the wonderful still-life of fruit and pottery in the foreground, is there not both character and humour in the figure? Do we not feel that this is a real person, full of a stolid common sense and a dignity which rises above the incongruous maid's cap.

"Davy Byrne's Pub" shares with "The Servant Girl" the supreme quality of being a cross-section of life. While not quite so assured it still exhibits the same masterly handling of paint. This picture is frankly spoiled for me by an uneasy feeling that the two figures in it have "posed for the painter." It lacks that quality which, I think, such a picture should have of being a slice of life surprised; the two men have moved apart, obligingly, to let us see their drinks; they are slightly self-conscious, like those irritating amateur actors who seem to be always aware of the audience. But in the face of the whole achievement this is an unworthy and carping criticism and one is forced to ask, is there any other Irish artist who can paint like that, or, at any rate, is there anyone who does. And is it not a glorious thing that there is an Irish painter who can still surprise us, and from whom we may expect still greater things?

JOHN DOWLING

MUSIC

THE DUBLIN OPERATIC SOCIETY

IN last month's issue appeared a short criticism of a season of opera given in Dublin by the Dublin Operatic Society. I would like to refer further to this Society and its work, its virtues, its shortcomings and its difficulties—and this, for certain reasons; firstly, because of the importance of opera as a vehicle for the furtherance of musical culture; secondly, because of the relationship between the work of the Society and the necessity for the establishment of a national symphony orchestra—a subject to which I have devoted some articles recently, and, thirdly, because the work done by this Society is the best of its kind in Ireland and merits both attention and criticism.

The language of modern European music is an ancient thing having behind it centuries of development. Peoples that have lived in the main stream of European musical culture have but little difficulty in understanding this language, except, perhaps, in its latest developments, since this music, as it were, has grown up under their very eyes, and, since the continued expansion of its idiom has been conditioned, to some extent, at least, by the need of expressing the mental and emotional states experienced by these peoples—for, even the great artist is but the child of his time. There, side by side with the gradual growth of musical idiom progressed the understanding of its implications by these peoples, implications all the more easily understood and appreciated because of their smooth accretion. But here in Ireland, out on remote Atlantic fringes, removed from the stream of European culture, bothered by political, economic and religious troubles, this great musical development has passed by without making any impression, has been virtually unnoticed. And so, any movement devoted to the propagation of musical culture commences its work in Ireland under this initial handicap, that the very idiom of its culture is outside the experience of the people, is not understood. For the furtherance of the understanding of modern musical idiom the best of all vehicles is, undoubtedly, opera. Unlike the symphonic vehicle where development and expression are, more or less, unconditioned by anything but purely musical necessities, operatic music is conditioned by dramatic values, by stage-action. And thus opera provides, to the most unintelligent listener, a musical mystery and its key—for its music and drama being inter-related each may be made clear in all its implications by reference to the other. This is not to say that a nodding acquaintance with an opera is all that is necessary for an adequate appreciation of modern European music, but, that the easiest road to such appreciation is *via* the road of opera.

The main practical difficulty to be overcome by any scheme for the furtherance of musical culture is to get an audience to sit and listen intently for the duration of performance. It is surely expecting super-human qualities of endurance to think that an uneducated audience should sit with intent mind through what seems to it to be the mysteriously endless musical gyrations

of a symphony, gyrations as far outside their thinking as the differential calculus. With a drama upon the stage dealing in emotions that are part and parcel of its own life, such an audience may be held, and, subconsciously will begin to acquire musical equivalents in design, in tone and colour, for the various mental and emotional states that are portrayed upon the stage. In other words, the relationship of music to life, emotion, experience, will be manifested, even if only understood by the audience sub-consciously; and the musical education of such an audience will have begun. This is the importance of opera as a vehicle for the furtherance of musical culture, a particularly valuable vehicle in the circumstances obtaining in Ireland.

In certain ways the scheme of organisation obtaining in the Dublin Operatic Society represents probably the best means for the production of adequate operatic performance in Ireland at present. As I have stated before, the Society, for its productions, provides a chorus of about seventy voices and uses the best available talent among its members for the filling of subsidiary roles. In this way promising Irish artists are given graded experience and as they play their parts in the company of the best available English operatic singers, who are specially engaged for the various operas, such experience is of enormous practical and artistic value. Added to this the operas are produced by an experienced Covent Garden producer, and two out of every three presented are conducted by a Covent Garden conductor. (The Society's local conductor prepares the chorus and local soloists for all productions, and one complete opera each season is his, for preparation, and presentation and conducting). By these means adequate stage presentations are possible. If a criticism must be made it is firstly, that working under such a scheme, at least a week's performances must be given before individual efforts begin to merge into team-work, and secondly, that, with limited financial resources the Society, undertaking the engagement of highly paid operatic stars, must confine its attention to operas that are sure "box-office" propositions. (This latter is the gravest drawback since it means a limitation on the production of works that are of choicer vintage than may be appreciated by the ordinary palate, a limitation upon the educational value of the Society's work). But both these criticisms merely mean that the Society is insufficiently equipped financially, and for this, certainly, the Society may not be blamed. It is to be regretted that the fruition of many months' work on everybody's part should be confined to a week's presentation in Dublin—such limitation being governed by mere financial considerations. In countries where cultural values were properly appraised such waste of effort would certainly be obviated and the Society's productions would be used extensively by Government for the purposes of cultural propaganda.

Where the present scheme for production is weak is upon the orchestral side. The Society engages the regular theatre orchestra and augments it with extras, drawn from various sources. Adequate rehearsals for this orchestra (of forty players approximately) would entail financial commitments far beyond the

financial scope of the Society. So on the one hand we have a chorus and subsidiary principals drilled and rehearsed for some months, and professional artists who are intimate in every sense with the work in hand, and, on the other, an orchestra gathered together at more or less the last minute, owing to financial considerations, such orchestra having one short rehearsal, or at most two, for each opera to be produced. Anything like adequate orchestral playing may not be expected under such circumstances, for the orchestra should have at least equal knowledge with the stage personnel of the work in hand. Adequate performance could be had only from an established orchestra, each player being intimately acquainted with the work produced and with the quantity and quality of co-operation to be expected from his neighbour in the orchestra. The solution of all purely orchestral matters, problems of balance, tone-weight, colour and such things, being achieved almost sub-consciously by each and every player through long experience in dealing with such questions. If such an orchestra were to be had, it would ease considerably the financial pressure now burdening such organisations as the Dublin Operatic Society and, at last, there would be a possibility of completely adequate opera presentation in Ireland. One hates to join in the welter of cries for Government subsidies, but, one can say that the best subsidy that could be given to such societies as the one under discussion would be the provision of a properly constituted symphony orchestra, upon the services of which such societies could call. Of course payment would be made for such services—at present payment is being made, but adequate results in return are impossible of attainment. (It was of matters orchestral I was thinking, when I wrote, last month, of the “nearly adequate” performances of this Society).

What I have written above of the orchestra will not contain anything new to the directors of the Society, who are fully aware of orchestral deficiencies; also, it must not be construed as a complaint against the directors, but, merely as a short and by no means complete dissertation upon the difficulties of opera production in Ireland upon the orchestral side.

I have referred earlier to the limitation in choice of production imposed by financial stringency. I hope I will not be suspected of making a carping criticism when I say that I do not think that the Society has fully exploited the range of choice even under this cramping influence. There seems to be a tendency to specialise in Italian opera—the main contributors to programmes being Donizetti, Puccini and Verdi. One would like to see at least one production of German opera every season, even if the operas chosen were the popular ones. For, while Italian opera has its own excellences, it does not by any means exhaust the potentialities of the operatic form, and the German mind in opera has concentrated upon other orientations. In fact, one might say that culturally one type is the antidote to the other; and I think the inclusion of German opera would strengthen the tone of the cultural work that is undoubtedly being done by the Society. It is, of course, much too early

in the day even to murmur hopes of Debussy, Moussorgsky, Strauss ; but, perhaps, it is not being too optimistic to think one day of adequate performances of *Fidelio*, *Don Giovanni*, *Othello*.

Even under the circumstances obtaining at present, I think it would not be impossible for the Society with its excellent organisation to give us along with its operas a short season of ballet. There are many ballet dancers in Dublin whose technique is, more or less, adequate to fulfill certain demands, their progress to ultimate proficiency being merely a matter of having the necessary opportunities given them. At present the main need for welding scattered individual effort in this art is the interest of a central body with an organisation capable of producing shows—capable, I mean, of engaging theatres, large orchestras, and so on. It might be possible with such shows as Wurmser's "L'enfant prodigue" to bring a new audience into the theatre and ultimately into the operatic theatre. With such productions, I think, the Society's cultural scope would be vastly extended. Names such as Rimsky-Korsakoff and Stravinsky would not convey to the people, as now, the idea of composers of concert music which can be heard on the radio, but such names would stand in their consciousness for master-musicians in the great art of ballet. With the inclusion of such names at their true worth our musical culture would be a better balanced thing, probably, than it is. Such expansion of the Society's activities could not be undertaken lightly, but ultimate success would more than compensate for the thankless drudgery of organising production.

EAMONN O GALLCHOBHAIR

THEATRE

PLAYERS—PLEASE !

The Comhar Drámuíochta (Gaelic Players) concluded its season with its best show—Gearóid Ó Lochlainn's *An t-Éirghe Amach*, a fine play dealing with a young volunteer whose soul sickens at the bloodshed the Rising of 1916 involves. He deserts, steals home, and his father, an old Fenian, realising the son is not cut out for soldiering, goes out to take his place in the ranks and is shot as he crosses the street outside by a passing British patrol. Pathos could be very easily have been spelt with a "b"—and both the author's lines and his own finely restrained acting as the father successfully avoided that danger. There was some O'Caseyish treatment of the other tenement dwellers, skilfully rendered in a few lines each of them, each alive and definite. Very balanced acting brought these out, though the play itself seemed to run away with the author in the drunk scene, where Séamus Ó hÉaluithe gave us a hilarious five minutes with Ruaidhri Mac G' Choinnigh's embarrassed good-nature and Máirín Ní Shúilleabháin's delightful Áine in excellent support. Diarmuid Ó hAinlighe rather overacted the son, a difficult part, however, requiring experience and a sense of values only its author can show—when he wishes. Gearóid has done some ranting in his time, too.

Included in this show was *An Pib fé's na Bántaibh*, Fiachra Eilgeach's translation of T. C. Murray's *The Pipe in the Fields*, a lovely little play. In common with other translations, this one revealed the authentic Gaelic basis of T. C. Murray's English style—due to faithful recording of country speech, only one or two generations removed from Gaelic. These translations, therefore, run quite easily with a genuine native ring, which is a pleasure to hear when associated with T. C. M.'s own feel for the dramatic line and imaginative phrase. The play was fairly well handled, the production being no more than competent, but Caitlín Ní Catháin deserves special mention for her performance as the mother—a performance that kept me enthralled by its sensitive imagination, every muscle and thought being dominated by the part itself; all too rarely nowadays does one see all sense of "actor" disappear in a living, breathing *character* on the stage. I hope such players as this will realise that what they can do with one part, can be done with all. It requires work, of course, and a sense of responsibility, a pride of profession which will be something more than mere self-esteem, as is too often the case in Dublin now. The other players were adequate, a term as insipid as the acting described. The required lyric treatment based on imaginative insight was largely lacking, though Gearóid Ó Lochlainn's substitute of mellowed goodnature was satisfying, if still too pedestrian—a poetic play needs lyric treatment even of prosaic people.

The previous show, Micheál Ó Siocfhradha's *Aon Mhac Aoife Alban*, was a very good effort in the heroic mode—this author can be always relied on for stylish dialogue, here quite dramatic also. The play, like Yeats' *On Baile's*

Strand, deals with the killing by Cuchullain of his own son, borne to him by Aoife of Scotland. Aoife herself is here the central character, and a major defect was her (inevitable) absence from the third act, since all interest had been concentrated on her in the first two, Cuchullain being rather thinly drawn, while her two servants were emphasised by the author to an extent not at all attained in the production—all this resulting in a rather patchy show. A notable feature was a long sequence dealing with the Gaelic reaction to Roman imperial expansion and similar topicalities of the period, beautifully handled by Ruaidhri Mac G' Choinnigh as an old Gaelic mercenary back from Europe, and recounting his exploits to Aoife and her household—very rarely, indeed, have I been so held by simple narration, supported by sympathetically co-ordinated voice, gesture, expression and posing—a fine display of genuine, unobtrusive, acting. “Adequate” once again describes the rest of the players—though genuine efforts were made by all to achieve more, notably by Niamh Nic Ghearailt, who was badly miscast as Aoife, being too small in size and light and quick in voice to sustain the part of a warrior queen. Still, with intelligent use of levels, setting and costumes and a suggestive use of groupings, an imaginative producer could have helped her to overshadow even Cuchullain's colossal stature, for she had feeling and intelligence to spare for this part. As it was, the production of this play was disappointingly poor and mechanical, full of absurd downstage “asides” with movement restricted to crossings from stool to bench to seat and back again. After all, there is no need to *emphasise* the smallness of the Peacock.

I should like to mention a Keating Branch show which concluded the Gaelic season for the sake of the plays treated—*Cúigeachas* and *Oidhche mhaith agat, a Mhic Uí Dhomhnaill*, the acting being fair to good, with Ruaidhri Mac G' Choinnigh outstanding in the first, and Seán Ó Chonchubhair in the second with a part he has created (and will probably do for the delectation of deceased Gaels in Tír na n-Óg, when he gets there !). Both plays, however, showed a real sense of topicality in Gaelic matters, and were native and refreshing accordingly, *Cúigeachas* being almost untranslatable, turning as it does on provincialisms in Irish. Both plays are pure farce of real neatness and verve, and require, therefore, slickness and sangfroid from the players, when they should be utterly hilarious. As it was, the show was quite enjoyable, revealing several Comhar players in holiday mood.

Looking back on the year's work, the Comhar has presented some twelve shows, all revealing a constant struggle to escape a mediocrity forced on playwrights and players by lack of public support, as well as by a theatre too small to pay for itself and not permitting of royalties sufficient to reward playwrights for really good work—done, as far as I can see, just through sheer regard for the language and an itch to write plays. This, and an odd tea party, is all the satisfaction they get. Some of these shows were definitely poor, others were more definitely good. All revealed uneven production and utter lack of imagination and enterprise in staging and dressing, for which there is no

excuse whatever, since a small stage allows of effects impossible for a large one, notably in sensitive lighting (of which I saw never a trace that I can remember), and settings of neatness and style. I am aware of the difficulties of cost, lack of room and workshop; above all, lack of support from Gaelic "enthusiasts," who apparently prefer to hear themselves speak rather than listen to others on a stage. Yet, far more could have been done and a tighter organisation and more shrewd control of expenditure are vitally necessary. The worst of it is that the players, as a whole, have a freshness and capacity for sympathy, revealed even in the plays dealt with this month, and unique in Dublin to-day. But these qualities are running to waste without proper production and adequate staging to give them the necessary windowdressing. Given these, the Comhar could put on even now shows that would lend real prestige to the Gaelic movement and, if its request to the State for a larger theatre and annual grant to run it succeeds (as it ought if the State backing for Irish is sincere), it might well become the real Irish National Theatre. At the moment, more *actresses* (not merely dresses with a voice inside) are urgently required, as well as more versatility from the men (a point all our theatres could well consider, since acting has declined steadily these days). A very real weakness here is either inadequate or else crudely overdone make-up, a point which has often spoilt an otherwise good performance for me; both this, and tawdry costuming, being due to that lack of imagination I have already complained of, since both must be more subtle in a tiny theatre than in a large one, a point overlooked even in such settings as were specially designed for the Comhar this year—stencils are not the thing if unevenly done when one is a mere fifteen to twenty feet away with every defect glaringly apparent. And with this and my best wishes I leave the Comhar Dramuiochta..

The best show this month was Turgenev's *A Month in the Country*, done at the Gate; Christine Longford's costumes were quite lovely and the production and settings, by Peter Powell, were very good generally if rather weak in detail, especially in modelling, both being best in the storeroom scene, a really lovely piece of work by everybody concerned. Jean Anderson's Natalia was a sincerely sympathetic rendering, full of light and shade, which overcame slight monotony in speaking; Betty Chancellor's Vera was almost equally good, if not quite so well rounded and developed. Of the men, only Blake Gifford's Doctor Shpigelsky really deserves mention, the rest being—"adequate," often surprisingly so. As in *As You Like it*, Gifford revealed here a real character sense, which goes far to make him one of Dublin's best players of polished comedy, requiring that subtle exaggeration and grotesquerie that true full-blooded comedy should warm the heart with. He enchanted me without fail at every appearance—and I don't think it was just reaction from the "adequacy" of the others. On the other hand, his peasant in *The Uncrowned King*, by V. A. Pearn and Brinsley Macnamara, was a terrible piece of ranting followed later by a suavely poised rendering of Justin McCarthy. This play on Parnell was due for mention as the worst play of the month until Maura

Molloy's *Who Will Remember?* was allowed out in the Abbey. Both plays were courageous but clumsy efforts at depicting a life-story, and neither were coherent enough nor developed the characters in such a way as to convince—Parnell was more fool than anything else, Kitty O'Shea's psychology was childish, though alleged to be that of a sensitive worldly-wise woman, and the Pomerry's (another aspect, by the way, of the Abbey's growing preoccupation with the decay of our "gentry," so charmingly ingrown) were not sufficiently related to background to provide a contrast which would measure their abnormality—resulting in unreality and a murkiness, which was further darkened by poor lines (badly rendered) and an absurd third act full of sentimental anti-climax, only the first two acts being actually the play. A pity, because melodrama well done can be magnificent theatre, and this play had real possibilities. However, the Gate once again provided some lovely acting by John Stephenson as Father Cassidy and Robert Hennessy as Gladstone, both reliable men, who very rarely let a part down. Here they were utterly delightful—it was acting pure and unalloyed, sheer personal creation of a part from bones so dry they crumbled into dust when handled by the rest of the cast—only Jean Anderson once again revealing she understood she had more to do than behave on a stage, which is all Kitty O'Shea did as Doris Finn, a lamentable display of gowns, teeth and unfeeling elocution.

Both this play and Maura Molloy's "mellerdrammer" of madness revealed thoroughly inept production—there were honest attempts at imagination and poetic touches in the scripts, which were killed by realistic sets and photographic acting coupled with pretentious producing. Stylisation of sets and sensitive acting would probably have saved both shows from being the disasters they were—though whether, in the end, they would be worth the trouble is doubtful. Still, art is the intelligent overcoming of obstacles. The acting in this Abbey show was the poorest, most unprofessionally irresponsible seen there for a long time, only Ria Mooney doing anything and certainly achieving much with her part, though even she failed at times to get over, due mainly to lack of support. Hugh Hunt's part as the "daft" nephew was not one to reveal his abilities; but he showed personality at least and a pleasant, well-modulated voice—but why take this part? In fact, why was the play produced? The only other Abbey first production was Lennox Robinson's *Killycreggis in Twilight*, a pleasant, not very profound yet true, allegory of the decline of our "gentry," typified by the charming De Lury's. The author knew his players, of course, and they certainly served him well, for it was one of the most consistent shows the Abbey has done lately—in fact, only Acting makes me single out Christine Hayden's Judith and Josephine Fitzgerald as the doctor's wife (a snobbish attack on snobbery), both utterly alive and human renderings, not being hampered by De Lury charm. Judith's "I wish you'd keep quiet—I'll cry in a minute," was the most moving line I have heard in the Abbey for months—personal creation again. But why not every week, instead of for a few minutes in every month. Why is it I can never be sure of seeing Acting

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FILMS

IN THE CINEMA

THE GORGEOUS HUSSY : Directed by Clarence Brown. Metro.-Goldwyn-Mayer : Capitol Cinema.

This is one of the finest examples of film craft seen in the cinema for some time. It raises its director, Clarence Brown, into the front rank of intelligent film makers and justifies the positions that nearly all its players hold in the scale of Hollywood's star system. Each player achieves the height of personal development, the popular values of the story are kept and yet the most beautifully proportioned results are achieved by the directorial co-ordination. A perfect sense of style and period bind the incidents together, and each fresh incident and turn of character provides new delight by superb handling in all its elements.

A story of Peggy O'Neale—Pothouse Peg—heroine with a stormy passage through American History during Andrew Jackson's presidency. The plot concerns itself with three of her love affairs closely bound up with the rise to power of Jackson and dealing finally with her social battles against the blue blood puritanical scandalmongers of Washington. Possessed of a story of such absorbing interest the director proceeded to subordinate setting, lighting, camera and acting to its telling, and so we have one of the best historical films America has ever given us.

Joan Crawford must get full credit for her excellent performance as Peg, and exquisite about describes the playing of Melvyn Douglas as Senator John Randolph of Virginia ; but if one is to enthuse fully and unconditionally about acting it is to Beulah Bondi that the full meed of praise must go for her characterisation as Mrs. Rachel Jackson, backwoods wife of the "Gineral." Miss Bondi's performance in this film, coupled with her appearance as Mrs. Jones in "Street Scene," mark her as probably the greatest actress now appearing on the screen. Lionel Barrymore (Andrew Jackson), Franchot Tone, Robert Taylor, Alison Skipworth, and James Stewart, fully deserve their credits.

The camera work was excellent in itself, and yet completely subordinated to the creation of the scene. Full value was extracted from very good settings, and the judicious use of music heightened the emotional appeal of the picture.

The unity of the picture makes reference to individual moments well nigh impossible, as each moment had its distinctive qualities and place in the continuity. Those who have not seen this film are recommended to do so when it comes to their local cinema, because it is a very beautiful and very great film, indeed.

GIRLS' DORMITORY : Directed by Irving Cummings. Twentieth Century Fox : Grand Central Cinema.

The perfect example of hokum in the cinema. From its opening shots dreeping with saccharine synthetics and flowers to its incredible happy ending, the cheapness of the work progressed with imitations that approached the cliché state—"Mädchen in Uniform," "Zoo in Buda Pesth," and we may be sure "Lac aux Dames." To judge Simone Simon from this film would scarcely be fair but it may be recorded that we were not impressed. Twentieth Century Fox might take a lesson from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and realise that story and storyteller are more important than personalities. "Fury," "Kind Lady," and "The Gorgeous Hussy" mean more to filmgoers than the personality vehicles of June Lang or Simone Simon.

SAN FRANCISCO : Directed by W. S. Van Dyke. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer : Stephen's Green Cinema.

What must be Hollywood's apotheosis of the Legion of Decency has succeeded in catching the popular imagination of Dublin. It is rare nowadays to find the ordinary cinemagoer taking more than a passive interest in films, but a spontaneous enthusiasm has been created by this film.

Its theme of sin and vice earning the wrath of God and the softening of the hard heart before the vision of love have served the showmen before this in "The Ten Commandments" and "Dante's Inferno"; but in the present film there is a certain sincerity mainly contributed by the humanised tough guy of Clark Gable and the equally humanised Father Mullins of Spencer Tracy. The latter has surely achieved the greatest phenomenon of the screen in the portrayal of a priest who possesses the qualities of a human being and who presents nobility in a true perspective.

It is hard not to feel that the spectacular earthquake and burning city were not the real *raison d'être* of the film and the devotion of a special film treatment to this sequence confirms the suspicion. The appeal in such scenes may be far from a religious one and may easily be the modern counterpart of the arena of another era. The sequences were certainly impressive; but beating the big drum is an old screen dodge, and when ham opera star, Jeanette McDonald, leads on the survivors to newer and presumably holier achievements, we may be excused our human weakness if we come out of the cinema determined to follow her virtuous example.

As entertainment the film is sure fire stuff, while technically it is of interest because of its imitation of Russian technique in the earthquake and finale sequence. The director is to be congratulated on a film which remains poised throughout on the borderline between hokum and artistry without ever committing itself to either.

BROKEN BLOSSOMS : Directed by Hans Braham. Twickenham Films : Stephen's Green Cinema.

A fine theme always calls for the maximum of sincerity and the greatest individuality in the person who undertakes to achieve its crystallisation on the screen. Such a theme is provided by the present film but such attributes are clearly not in the possession of the present director. Consequently, the effect of the film was to arouse regret at the half-hearted attempt to revive the memories of another screen artist's work—the silent classic of D. W. Griffith.

The opening of the film was British Studio at its worst. Emlyn Williams was mis-cast as the Chinese boy, and the best moments in the film savoured of direct imitation of Griffith. A very fine performance from Dolly Haas made an adequate compensation for other weaknesses.

TREASURE IRELAND. THE IRISH RIVIERA. Produced by the I.T.A. Film Unit.

At last an opportunity has presented itself to see the work of this unit, which is under the supervision of Mr. Davidson, who has worked with the Empire Marketing Board and the G.P.O. Film unit in England. To be critical of first efforts may seem a thankless job, but if the incentive to produce good work is to be provided it must be found in that very probing into the weaknesses, hesitations and incompetencies of the work in question.

To say that the films were disappointing is putting things mildly. The general impression was one of very poor work. Poor as tourist propaganda and poor as film. I am even making the concession of mentioning film last.

The camera work, with a few exceptions, was bad, unimaginative, and

suffered from such fundamental technical errors as incorrect exposure and incorrect focus, while bizarre effects were achieved by the use of wrong filters. This in a film of this kind is intolerable. Static pictorial compositions represented the height of achievement. I mention the camera work first as this is usually employed to cover a cinematic nakedness in the majority of documentaries and travelogues. The construction of the films began and ended nowhere, and again was demonstrated the futility of the rambling reporter method of film making. In this sense the film was in the sub-amateur stage.

The musical accompaniment, which was of the usual cliché sentimental type, provided suitable background to the commentator. Two precious uses of sound and image combinations were in the loom sequence—marred by clash of rhythms—and the O'Shea shop front sequence—made ludicrous by the direct contrast of magnitudes of subject and treatment.

As to the impression of Ireland gained, one would think that it was a pretty mediocre hole, an impression strengthened by the fact that these films were made here.

LIAM O LAOGHAIRE

THEATRE—continued from page 74

when I go to a theatre in Dublin ; there is hardly a player has not moved me once or oftener, why not always ? It is not the actual parts or lack of parts, as this month proved again and again—it is lack of professional spirit, of honest desire for craftsmanship in the theatre. Once again, I repeat a query made here months ago —Playboy or professor ?

Revivals at the Abbey included St. John Ervine's *Boyd's Shop*, rather rambling but entertainingly no-brow, in which Frolic Mulhern was the best of a good lot with Eileen Crowe thoroughly at home as gossipy Miss McClug ; Paul V. Carroll's *Shadow and Substance*, for which everything I said before still holds, the play being as good and the acting no worse than before ; and, finally, Lady Gregory's *Devorgilla* with Moya Devlin in the name part, a performance which was very pleasingly in character up to the last few speeches, when she surprised me by forced and metallic rendering of lines no harder to handle than earlier ones—due, I believe, to "too many cooks." M. J. Dolan's Flann was notable for excellent timing of exits and consistent feeling in handling, while everybody else enjoyed themselves hugely forming pretty friezes and watching horse races in the auditorium when not helping Frank Carney to chant his lays, quite a successful rendering of an awkward part. Costumes were after my own taste as to colour, if unduly uncouth in line ; but the setting was absurd and nearly killed the play—the whole essence of the play is *Devorgilla's* transitory escape from seclusion and murkiness of colour cannot suggest this. This was one example of producer-effects that failed.

In conclusion, I should like to remind readers thinking of holidaying abroad that a dramatic festival is being run until October at the Paris Exhibition, where one may see the players of practically every country in typical native plays—this country, however, not being yet represented, according to my latest information, although efforts are being made to remedy this.

SEÁN Ó MEÁDHRA

BOOK SECTION

THE IRISH SHELF

THEOBALD WOLFE TONE

WOLFE TONE AND THE UNITED IRISHMEN: For or Against Christ (1791-1798), Vol. I. By Leo McCabe. (*Heath Cranston*. 7s. 6d.). pp. 258.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THEOBALD WOLFE TONE. Abridged and edited by Sean O'Faolain. (*Nelson*. 5s.). pp. XXXI+307.

Leo McCabe has achieved a complete falsification of a man and an epoch through the grossest misuse of biographical and historical material. The historian of his own times finds it difficult to see truth for the passions and prejudices that surround him, live and violent—his heaviest task is to escape them. What, then, of the man who revives out of the tomb the uproar of eighteenth century oligarchies against the first “triumphs” of democracy? Mr. McCabe puts forward what he is pleased to call the Catholic case against the whole course of Irish Revolutionary Nationalism, pillories the dead generations of scoundrelly rebels in pages of black-leaded hysteria, Tone, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the Brothers Sheares, ex-Father John Murphy (*sic*), Davis, Mitchell, Lalor, Pearse and Connolly. The politics of present-day Ireland is Communism thinly disguised. In the hearts of our most blatant reactionaries he recognises a fatal hankering after Marx and Lenin. This book, according to the manifesto that usurps the place of publisher's blurb, will bring about “at a future General Election, another overthrow of unworthy and disaster-bringing custodians of Ireland's welfare.” But to his sorrow there is no one man could rule all Ireland to the satisfaction of Leo McCabe.

Our author's first hatred is Theobald Wolfe Tone, sordid adventurer, place-hunter, informer. To achieve this most thorough blackening of Tone as a man he makes the most of the autobiography. Tone's playful ironies, that humorous detachment that allowed him to laugh at himself, at his associates, even at his mission, Mr. McCabe turns with cumbrous emphasis into insincerity. Pécadilloes are magnified into monstrous iniquities. Falterings on a way most difficult and hazardous are made to look like treachery. Convivial evenings become horrid debauches. He completely ignores the evolution of the Republican revolutionary movement of '98 out of constitutional and colonial politics. Tone was always politically a realist. His realism drove him into that last position of a republicanism that was almost socialism, in the face of the immovable dictatorship of the oligarchy, the insincerity of the established constitutional patriots, the caution and timidity of the Catholic Hierarchy.

The evidence that Tone in 1794 gave information to the Government is drawn from letters written by the Marcus to his father, the Right Hon. John Beresford. In these letters, adjudged “absolutely reliable” by McCabe, Marcus claims to have acted as intermediary between the Government and Tone, to have arranged, in return for information, that the Government would grant Tone's pardon, reward him and enable him to live elsewhere. Mr. McCabe's method is that of the prosecuting counsel, not that of the historian. He does not refer to the father's reply to those letters, in which he says: “Douglas called upon me this day; we had a great deal of conversation about Rowan, etc., by which I found that neither he nor the Administration knew anything about the bargain, etc., with Tone; for he told me that, as Rowan had escaped, Tone was the next guilty person, and ought to be hanged. . . . He said that he had

evidence, or witness that would convict him He said he had letters from Sackville Hamilton (alleged by Marcus Beresford to have been party to the negotiations on the Government side) who never told him a syllable of any negotiations of any kind with Tone, nor did any communication of the sort come to the Ministers ; that they were mad at the escape of Rowan, and would be much displeased at any bargain with Tone." The witness referred to in the above was Cockayne, Government spy, who had the confidence of the United Irish leaders to an extent sufficient to render further information superfluous, the more so when that information was allegedly given on condition "that no use should be made of it to the prejudice of any person mentioned."

In this picture Tone, the whole man of the autobiography, is lost ; his generosity, his hatred of cant and oppression, his delightful humour, his all but too doting affection as father and husband, are suppressed. But Mr. McCabe is not really attacking the real Tone, but the "patriot" of middle-class tradition which demands its heroes all of a piece, turns men into "heroes" after the debauched, semi-educated, provincial-protestant tradition, erects a dummy whose lack of meaning can hurt no one : a flattering repudiation. Thus it is that our present-day reactionaries can honour Pearse and Connolly without a blush of either self-consciousness or shame. We have derived that psychological trait from protestantism.

The book does, with a fair degree of accuracy, reflect the contemporary attitude of the Irish Catholic Hierarchy to the revolutionary movement. "No Jewish King ought to wear the crown of Judah when Augustus and Tiberius wore it. No Messiah will come to us. Our Civil Messiah is come long since. His throne is established by the supreme authority of the British State." wrote Most Rev. Dr. Molloy of Kilkenny. Rev. Dr. Moylan, of Cork, bids his people recall to their minds "the sacred principles of loyalty, allegiance and good order loyalty to the sovereign and respect for the constituted authorities." But what order ? And authorities by whom constituted ? These exhortations were addressed to the Catholic Irish, living under a monstrous tyranny, robbed and degraded. These "men of no property" were not merely hirelings, but as hirelings they were treated with the utmost cruelty and barbarity by a landed aristocracy and a landlord magistracy that gave no right and took no wrong. And this system was maintained by the arms and money of this "civil Messiah," who ultimately let loose his soldiery on the people, and that in a part of the country where the revolutionary organisation was weakest, provoking the rebellion, as Castlereagh cynically remarked, to provide the opportunity of teaching the people a salutary lesson : not to hope for justice.

The bogey then was the Jacobinism of the French Revolution. Political Christianity, but not Christian politics, allied the Churches with the Monarchies. To-day the Catholic historian, Hilaire Belloc, can write : "The revolution was not unacceptable in its original principles to the Irish temperament. The enthusiasms appealed; the ideas underlying those enthusiasms were drawn from the Catholic culture of Europe." The Church as institution unfortunately tends to depend for formal expression on the powers that determine the nature of the surrounding society, and, therefore, becomes prey to expedients that are in direct contradiction to its spirit. The same is true of even secularist ideologies, witness Russia as a political unit in the capitalist world. The Church in Ireland is in retrospective agreement with, or at least acquiesces in Irish revolutionary effort in the past. But, then, what was subversive of absolute good in 1916, cannot be good in 1937. What was wrong then cannot be right now. The antecedents of 1916 as evoked by Pearse and Connolly were Tone and Lalor

and Mitchell, all of whom were, in their day, subversive of the contemporary social and political order, of political Christianity and in their day came under the ban. To some, though a limited, extent we have the fruits of their teaching.

That same revolutionary tradition is alive to-day and in no different position politically and socially. It is still the enemy of positive evils. It is the most dishonest of folly to think that discontent which expresses itself in arms, in military manoeuvres, in willing submission to the vileness and indignity of political prisons, in strikes and labour demonstrations, is a wanton hatred of order. We have not order, but disorder stabilised by force and cloaked by dishonest propaganda. To-day the social order of this capitalist state is defended in the name of Catholicism; Christ is invoked against its enemies. This alliance with Capitalism is more inimical to the spirit of Christianity than Communist bombers, or Fascist interdicts. Looking back, and the position is well reflected in McCabe, on the opposition of the Catholic Hierarchy of '98 to the United Irishmen, or of '48 to the Young Irelanders, the political expediency that inspired that opposition is obvious. Must we wait until passions have expended themselves in killing and another batch of dead is buried before we see this present parallel?

Sean O'Faolain's excellent abridged edition of Tone's autobiography is most welcome. But for the diaries, says Mr. O'Faolain in his preface, "He would have come down to us wrapped in the romantic atmosphere which has melted Emmet, Lord Edward, Smith O'Brien, John O'Leary, even so recent a figure as Pearse, into graceful falsities. . . . From that fate he is saved by his diaries. His drinking, his temper, his realism, his flute-playing, his flirtations, his extravagant protestations, his indiscreet tongue, his utter lack of false dignity, are precisely the things that help us to understand him. They make us feel that he was sincere, that revolution to him was a serious matter and not a form of self-dramatisation or emotional escape." This abridgement omits nothing of importance to a knowledge of Tone the man: moreover, the editor has replaced interesting passages suppressed by the son from motives of family delicacy. The book, to my mind, gains considerable value from the editor's introduction, which underlines adroitly and unobtrusively the essential elements in the man, making one feel that if Mr. O'Faolain contemplated a further essay into biography he would find in Tone a subject ready to his hand.

This book is excellent value and Messrs. Nelson are to be congratulated on a fine piece of work.

EDWARD SHEEHY

SPAIN

SALUD ! An Irishman in Spain. By Peadar O'Donnell. (*Methuen*. 7s. 6d.). pp. 256

It is to me, as to Mr. O'Donnell, incredible that any Irishman can be found to take the side of General Franco. General Franco is obviously a rebel and a traitor, also has conspired with foreign powers to use force against the legal government of his own country. On the sea he is merely a pirate and has no rights whatever. Non-intervention is the merest humbug. The allies of General Franco are the non-intervention watch-dogs in the Mediterranean: they kill two birds with one stone! One of the guarantors of non-intervention sends a fleet of bombers to massacre the non-combatants of Guernica. Great Britain, until very recently—I suppose the Navy drew the line at helping murderers to sink British ships—did all she could, hypocritically, to ensure a Fascist victory, although the people of Great Britain have, all along, shown genuine democratic sympathies. Mr. O'Donnell doesn't say all this. He takes it all

for granted. He has no need to convince his readers of his sympathy for the popular cause. He is a sensible and honest man, and can have no truck with what the Christian Front calls the "Patriots." There is nothing to be said for them. Mr. O'Donnell approves no more than I do of the destruction of Churches by irresponsible hooligans on the popular side: but he approves still less, if possible, of the deliberate destruction of churches, convents and hospitals and the murder of non-combatants, including Basque priests, by General Franco and his "frightful" allies, whenever it happens to suit them. In a word, Mr. O'Donnell doesn't bother to defend the popular cause. It needs no defence. He has a rap or two for the Bishops to whom Christianity is less important than their class interests. He has many a rap for the so-called "Christian Front," which has no connection with Christianity, but is simply a political racket. Like all sensible and honest men, he believes that our opinions (for and against) the public ownership of land, industries and transport have nothing whatever to do with our religious convictions. It is by the merest accident, and mostly through the bad faith of the protagonists of repression and exploitation that Socialism and "Communism" (if the latter word means anything) have been associated with anti-religion. Mr. O'Donnell would remove the whole Spanish conflict from the religious or pseudo-religious plane, and regard it as a fight between international capitalism and democracy. The main interest of *Salud* is the frank account of his experiences in Spain, where he saw the very beginnings of the "trouble" in Catalonia and mixed with the humble and decent men, peasants, cobblers, tramway men, etc., who went out to free Spain and the world from the menace of militant and malignant Fascism. He has little good to say of the "liberal" government of February, 1936. Its supineness, its excessive toleration, made the Fascist plot possible. The treason could have been nipped in the bud, if the "liberals" had trusted the extreme left more wholeheartedly. The Catalan Government, too, was more Catalan than "left." Neither was ill-intentioned. Both were weak. And both were entitled to support. There is no bitterness in this vivid, human, book. A sincere compliment is even paid to the gallantry and humanity of the British Navy, both officers and men. "The officers were just perfect, but the Jack Tars were superb." (p. 120).

T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN

THE IRISH COUNTRYMAN. An anthropological study. By Conrad M. Arensberg, Ph.D. (*Macmillan*, 10s. 6d.). pp. xii + 216.

The importance of Ireland for the study of archaeology, anthropology, and history has recently come to be realised by scholars generally. We live in one of the few countries of Europe which escaped the Roman conquest. As a consequence that civilisation which persisted here until the Tudor conquest was a natural and indigenous development, affected undoubtedly by such continental influences as that which came in with Christianity, but affected solely through cultural and intellectual mediums. Ireland, therefore, is one of the few European countries in which the archaeological remains can be said to be uninfluenced by the civilisation of the Roman Empire. Similarly for anthropological studies there is a persistence of data which has been little influenced by foreign contact, even with an alien ascendancy.

Dr. Arensberg set himself to study human life as it exists to-day in Luogh, a remote district in County Clare. Conditions in Luogh seem to be those which were generally prevalent outside the big town some fifty years ago, and the author's work has, therefore, a historical as well as an anthropological value. The impressions he received were embodied in six lectures, delivered

at the Lowell Institute in Boston, and are printed in the form in which he gave them to his audiences. They should prove as interesting to us as they undoubtedly were to America, while the critical Irish mind, already possessed of a general knowledge of the conditions described, will be able to appraise his work more competently.

Not everything that Dr. Arensberg has stated will find acceptance, particularly in regard to folklore, but in the main it may be said that he has provided a true picture and a proper synthesis of the particular conditions he has studied. Lastly, to those readers who may be intimidated by the thought of a highly technical vocabulary, let it be said that this book has been written in ordinary language and that it is well worth examination, if only to reveal how incidents of our behaviour in everyday life originate in the unwritten social law of the community.

R. D. E.

SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

OILS FROM IRISH-GROWN PLANTS. Agricultural Bulletin, No. 4. Report by Prof. Joseph Reilly and Denis F. Kelly, M.Sc. (*Cork University Press*. 92 pp. + Plates 6. 2s. 6d.).

Were the contents of this monograph assimilated by those in the Government responsible for economic planning, the results could not be other than fruitful. The case for at least attempting to make this country self-supporting in most of the important edible or industrial oils is set forth in the most cogent way possible—on a basis of experimental facts. An admirable foreword by Professor O'Rahilly ensures that the hesitant will delve further.

The principal groups of vegetable oils in which this country is interested are edible and non-drying oils, fatty oils that have the property of forming hard skins and essential oils. World supplies of the former virtually inhibit local production and besides tropical conditions are usually required. In the case of the drying oils, however, which are best suited to a temperate climate, experiments have yielded such encouraging results that, even were it not proven that the production costs—claimed in the case of linseed to be comparable with oats—could compete in the world market, nevertheless, the case is sufficiently strong to warrant investigation with a view to state subsidy. In such seeds as linseed, rape, hemp, poppy, mustard, sunflower and soya bean—all very fully experimented on and with promising results except, perhaps, in the case of hemp—are to be found the very basis of such manufactures as soaps, paints, linoleum, margarine, colza oil, etc. The residue, after the oil has been extracted, is almost invariably of high value as a cattle food or a fertiliser, both also belonging to imported groups at present.

The present reviewer published an article many years ago on the Industrial Absorption of Agricultural Surplus, pleading for the establishment of industries ancillary to agriculture—starch, linoleum, industrial alcohol, and others—but, above all, the vast range of indigenous and decentralized industries which would follow upon afforestation, if taken up in earnest. Public opinion has not yet acquired a driving power in these directions; but one thing this publication will force on officialdom—it cannot plead ignorance. And if it is really interested in the Gaeltacht, the solution should be sought in *Pinus Sylvestris* and *Papaver Somniferum*, and not in shoe laces, buttons or pencils.

In congratulating the authors on this painstaking Report and their collaborators in the field, a word of praise is also due to the Press that makes such publications possible. One is tempted to ask what is University College, Dublin, doing—or Trinity, for that matter?

J. L. O'D.

Cinnlae Amhlaoibh Uí Súilleabháin: Curo a Trí. An t-Áthair Mícheál Mág Crait do cuir in eagar. Cumann na Sgríbeann Saebhíge. 1936.

Tá tuilleadh eolais ar stéir a's ar nósaiú na tíre faoi'n bliadhain 1831 ins an imleabhar nua seo. Ní fada a téir sé 'un tosuis go mbíonn iomrád aige ar "Cosa na nDeachmunn." Sob troda ar na daoine agus dáil cata dá fuasairt aca ar na ministéirí Gallda, "ac" is beag an comar" a veir sé, "dul 'un tligis leis an diabol agus an cúir in ífreann." b'fior dó.

Sgeala aige, níos fuidhe anonn, an Saebhíge do veit ina teangaid mātardua as Saebhí 1 Montsearrat, ó aimsir Oilibéir Cromuill—rud a beireas greim ar a intinn. "Muise, mo fhad croide na viberatais bocta Saobhlaa; cia duibh bán iad, is ionnuih liom-sa clanna Saobhal."

Agus mar sin 'u'Amhlaoibh ó neac go neac agus ó sgeal go sgeal. Ní imtígeann morán ar an duine céadna. Is 'san bliadhain seo a tís an tamar airsean agus ar an tír—réim nua oideacais do bunú a's do buanú tairt ar éirinn uile, ar dóig gur cuireadh an Saebhíge ar ceal, a's go nveadair a sgoil péin ar gcúl. Is mór is fiú sin do léigead, a bfuil le hinnsint as an easartóir ina réamhrá faoi stéir na Saebhíge ins an am sin.

Duine ceannasac Amhlaoibh Ó Súilleabháin feasda fá cúrsaí lictíveacata a's seancuis. Véir a curd scribinní dá léigead as beag agus mór. Ac' na daoine nac bfuil acfuinn acu ar na leabartai seo (siní slán acá ar fad ceann aca!), ní mór toga a's roga dá bfuil ionnta a veit ar fágail aca. Cairfear, cibé duine a déanpas é, rogaínteacas do déanad ar na blataib is veise de curd Amhlaoibh agus iad o'fágail ar líon an pobail.

S. Ó CEALLAIGH

HISTORY

THE CIVILIZATION OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY. By Jacob Burckhardt. (*Allen and Unwin*. The Phaidon Press. 7s. 6d.). pp. 640. illustrated.

There are a few historical works which, by reason of the magnitude of their subjects and the genius of their authors, achieve an immortality denied to those of the most painstaking and impeccable specialists. Because of the importance of his subject and the ability with which it was presented, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is almost as valuable to-day as when it first appeared. The then prevalent spirit of scepticism led him into an attack upon Christianity which clearly showed his inability to comprehend a spiritual force, but the *Decline and Fall* will outlive particular imperfections and serve to illuminate the minds of generations of students who know where they cannot depend upon their mentor.

Such a work is Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, written more than half a century ago by one who was fully aware of its limitations; for "even if he could look with greater confidence upon his own researches, he would hardly thereby feel more assured of the approval of competent judges." The impression of a scene presents a different picture to every mind; and, in choosing for his subject the study of a civilisation, it was realised by the author that "the same studies which have served for this work might easily, in other hands, not only receive a wholly different treatment and application, but lead also to essentially different conclusions."

Burckhardt's work has stood the test of time and now it comes to us in a form in which it will appeal to everyone. The first English translation, for the author wrote in his native German, was in two volumes, and, while the original plan has been maintained, the text is in one volume, with the addition of four hundred and twenty-one illustrations, specially chosen to give further strength to the author's presentment of that place and period. The price of

this fine volume is but seven shillings and sixpence. Is it too much to hope that our school and college libraries, as well as those individuals interested in history or art, will find a place on their shelves for such a bargain?

R. D. E.

POLITICS : PHANTASY AND FACT

TRADITION AND MODERNISM IN POLITICS. By A. J. Penty. (*Sheed and Ward*. 5s. pp. 183+vii).

A HISTORY OF PEACEFUL CHANGE IN THE MODERN WORLD. By C. R. M. F. Cruttwell. (Royal Institute of International Affairs). (*Oxford University Press*. *Humphrey Milford*. 7s. 6d. pp. 221).

It is refreshing to find a reputable author, in a book with so solemn a title, published by so solid a firm as Sheed and Ward, losing his temper so violently that it almost ruins his book. I say almost, because Mr. Penty exhausts his vocabulary of abuse in the first few pages to the advantage of the rest of the book. Murder, terrorism, vandalism, love of destruction for its own sake, are some of the accusations levelled indiscriminately at those who differ from Mr. Penty politically. Yet it is Mr. Penty who quotes Herodotus :

"Revenge is the one law of history."

Mr. Penty, perhaps by reason of his pioneership in the Guild Movement, is a severe critic of those who (to an outsider) would seem nearest to his "ideology." Chesterton, Belloc, The Douglas Social Credit Scheme, The New Deal, all come in for a generous measure of criticism. Mr. Penty is very good at pointing out the things that *must go* ; but he finds fault with everyone who is trying to get something done about it. In spite of his obvious bias, he even criticises Mussolini's Imperial designs, demonstrating that "Colonial Expansion" is only a postponement of the day of reckoning. Which, of course, is perfectly true.

On the problem of "Industrialism," Mr. Penty is definitely good. He approaches it in a spirit of compromise, advocating restriction and control of production, in preference to an artificial increase of "purchasing-power" (Social Credit). Yet it was not until I read Mr. Penty's comment (p. 148) on an outburst of Marx's that I clearly understood his attitude. Mr. Penty is amazed to find himself agreeing with Marx, and is astonished that :

"He (Marx) was *fully alive* to the dehumanizing . . . effects of this system . . . Yet instead of *facing the situation* as a clear issue between right and wrong, and *demanding the abolition* of the iniquity as Ruskin did, he exploited it in the interests of revolution." (My italics).

A brief survey of Irish history will show Mr. Penty the value of such "Demands," "Protests," etc. . . .

Mr. Penty is disappointing on Tradition, which he faces with a handful of Fascist "Ifs" : If only the Mediaeval Church had realised that the solution of all economic problems lay at its very doors in the Guilds . . . If only the Luddite Riots had made people aware of the "problem of machinery" . . . quite so : all would have been well—perhaps. There is only one conclusion to be drawn from the book :

"The present system cannot last."

It seems improbable that anyone will deny this. An eminently readable book.

Mr. Cruttwell's masterly work on "Peaceful Change in Modern History," written at the invitation of the Royal Society of International Affairs, is a gold-mine for students of Motives, Methods and Conditions of Cession, the Creation and Extinction of Sovereignty, Plebiscites, Changes of Status, etc.—matters of special interest to us in Ireland to-day.

Though primarily a standard work on a subject hitherto strangely neglected, the lucidity and thoroughness with which intrigues, bargains, and camouflaged threats are exposed, together with a fascinatingly impersonal style, make it ideal reading for those of us interested in the real, as opposed to the advertised motives for most international agreements.

New ideas, ideas which illuminate much of our everyday life, spring up on every page. Mr. Cruttwell points out that the vaster the scale of armaments, the greater the likelihood of "peaceful settlements of comparatively minor affairs." A nice point! Indeed, the very conception and definition of "peaceful change" is so subtly linked up with unuttered threats of "immediate and terrible war," or colossal negotiations, that one is surprised the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922 is not included.

The story of Heligoland, invaluable to the Germans in the Great War, and described by Admiral Mayne in 1890 as "of no conceivable strategic value," the sale of the Kimberley Diamond Fields (ownership disputed by a Basuto chief) by the Orange Free State to England, in 1876, for £90,000—the worst bargain in history, are only two of the many exciting negotiations described. Humphrey Milford is to be congratulated on this fine book.

CECIL FRENCH SALKELD

THE ROMANTIC AGE. By Prof. R. B. Mowat. (*Harrap*. 6s.).

This new book by the Professor of History in the University of Bristol is a continuation of earlier studies of the history and civilisation of England and Europe in the 18th century. The present volume, which is distinguished by its easy style and its mastery of fact, succeeds in displaying to the reader a vivid panorama of the many aspects of civilisation in the main European countries during the first half of the 19th century. Nearly half the volume deals with Germany, a Germany which now, by contrast, appears incredibly attractive in its fresh Renaissance of humane and liberal thought.

We are given vivid and familiar sketches of famous philosophers, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, of the Berlin Romantic school and the Berlin literary salons at the beginning of the century, of the origin of the German open-air movement, with Jahn and his Turnvereine, of the students' university societies, their liberal sympathies and their continued suppression, of the aristocracy which worked and the aristocracy which played, with a fine delineation of that choice product of the idle rich, the "dandy". The scene moves to Austrian Italy, Venice with Byron and his amours, and the slow mutterings of the Italian Risorgimento; to Rome with its interesting foreign colonies of scholars, diplomats and artists, the precarious equilibrium of the Papal States and the election of Pius VIII in 1829 seen through the eyes of Chateaubriand. Then comes a chapter on contemporary religious thought, Schleiermacher, Strauss at Tübingen, Renan, and the effects of radical criticism on religion.

The remainder of the book studies chiefly conditions in Spain and the Ottoman Empire; recounts the adventures of Western travellers in Greece, Syria, Palestine and Egypt; examines the counter-currents of liberalism and reaction in Russia, the "back to the people" movement of the Slavophiles and the consequent literary and revolutionary awakening.

There are also two chapters particularly relevant to the student of modern politics: one compares the peace-settlements of 1814-15 with that of Versailles; the other treats of the connexion between the nationalist teachings of the philosopher Fichte and the origin of National-Socialism in Modern Germany.

Professor Mowat deals with the historical past and propounds no hopeful solution of present world-unrest. Nor considering the present-day inevitable

inter-connexion of states is any solution possible in terms of state ideology. For the problem of life, order and justice is fundamentally a moral problem and no historical or actual state has ever possessed a full moral personality.

The author has no *parti pris* in this book, which impresses one as being written in moments of leisure, a sufficiently rare achievement in a hurried and largely futile age, and will be found interesting by all thoughtful students of the development of civilisation and of ideas.

JAMES J. TIERNEY

BIOGRAPHICAL

TURKISH DICTATOR

KEMAL ATATURK. By Hanns Froembgen. (*Jarrollds*, 18s.). pp. 286.

We are all familiar with the totalitarian aspect of Italy, Germany, and Russia. The disturbing effect of these dictatorships has spread and startled every democratic state in some form or another.

Perhaps the countries mentioned are too close to us in their mode of life to allow us to stand outside their powerful influences, and to take stock of them calmly at a distance.

This book on Kemal Ataturk may help us to take the long view, as Turkey is different, and we are not so nearly influenced by her affairs.

Here, then, we may read of the methods of a modern dictator, who first appears as a dissatisfied army officer, denied the official recognition of his gallant repulse of the Australians at Gallipoli. He is shown throughout the book as brave and resolute, and imbued with persistent revolutionary ideals, that lead him into trouble time and again under the old régime, whose forms and traditions he condemned as the cause of every misfortune borne by his unhappy country astride the war years.

Always intriguing and planning for a progressive and civilised Turkey, he eventually raises a rebellion in Anatolia, and gradually eliminates every obstacle, including his own friends, in the pursuit of his ambition. The book is, of course, intensively Fascist. In fact, one can almost feel the censor at the writer's elbow. The exaggerated grandeur of the treatment unfortunately defeats its own ends, and the combination of German sentimentality and swagger is antipathetic. There is no admission of Turkish atrocities, which leaves the book historically incomplete. One can see Kemal Ataturk as the prototype of the Führer, and though his deeds appear sufficiently superhuman to admit of tribal hero-worship, the author finds it necessary to embellish the portrait with continual eulogy, often distasteful and sometimes ridiculous.

Under Kemal, the whole outlook of the Turk has changed, and turned to the West. The Koran is practically abolished; every school is a State school; the yashmak is no more: Hats replace fezzes, and Roman characters the old ciphers.

More progressive measures are evinced in the drive to educate the people as a whole, and to make the country prosperous by developing her natural resources. Nothing is overlooked that may make Turkey, strong, independent, and secure in self-supporting isolation. The foreigner has always betrayed her in the past; therefore, alliances and outside financial aid are shunned.

Mistakes occur. The farcical attempt of the new Dictator to set up an "approved" opposition party, devastatingly Gilbertian in itself, is made more comic still by the sober-minded German author, who describes this episode in a portentous manner.

From the military point of view, Gallipoli raises the interesting question of

pitting warships against reasonably-armed coastal defences, which is, in principle, a mistake, as proved in the past at Sebastapol, Lissa, and Port Arthur. As is usual various regiments from Scots to Ghurkhas are mentioned in the invasion of the Turkish peninsula, but the epic part played by the old Dublins and Munsters at V Beach is neglected. Perhaps it is just as well. This incident is, I think our only connection with modern Turkey and her efficient stark Dictator, aptly nicknamed "The Grey Wolf."

A thought-provoking book, which has suffered rather in the translation by Kenneth Kirkness. It is indexed, and is well illustrated with interesting photographs. It also contains a map of Turkey, and a panorama of the Allied naval attempt on The Narrows.

JOHN LUCY

THINGS PAST REDRESS: An Autobiography. By Augustine Birrell. (*Faber and Faber*. 15s.).

In Law, in Politics, even in Literature, the late Augustine Birrell, when tested by the standard of his own potentialities, must be adjudged a comparative failure. He himself, in this autobiography, confesses as much: implicitly in the very title (at once a quotation and a mental shrug) which he has given his book; and explicitly, on numerous occasions throughout its length. "I had the feeling," he says, in describing the beginnings of his legal career at Lincoln's Inn, "that I never was intended to work very hard, and had no motive behind me urging me to do more than hold my own in any path along which I found it was my destiny to travel." There is, in that sentence, not only the overt and unashamed acceptance of his own lethargic doom, but, in every word and phrase of it, evidence of his waywardness and indirection—his complete lack of any positive energy, or fire, or force. A man of brilliant parts, he yet never, in anything he did, went the whole way of effort and achievement: never disturbed the depths of his own mind, or reached the end of his own thought.

So is it with the book—his last—before us. Abounding in good things, written in his best Birrell and "belles lettres" style, it, nevertheless, falls short of greatness to the precise extent, and for the identical reasons, that Birrell himself missed greatness. By no means without purpose or shape, admirable in broad conception and design, it yet, for want of a sustained or sustainable effort, falls time and again from its own set level or height of quality: lapses even, in its themes of widest import, into the veriest triteness and triviality. The Boer War, to Birrell, was "a horrid business and a horrid time"; the Rebellion (Irish) of 1916—and who, more than Birrell, should know better?—"a ridiculous failure from the first"; and even his own high religious and philosophic doubts he treats, in his "Backward Glance," with a like summariness and superficiality—propounding nothing tangible or real, resolving not even his own mind or thought.

Expecting too much of Birrell, we are disappointed. Coming down to the acceptance of less, we find, as has been said, innumerable good things in this book: a wealth of literary allusiveness by a "man of books and reading"; excellent portraits of his legal and political and literary contemporaries; and phrases, paragraphs, whole pages and chapters even, that are pure literature, written in Birrell's best and wittiest and wisest manner. "It is only the wearer who knows where the shoe pinches, and it is the heart alone that knows its own bitterness"; "we cannot, I suppose, be expected to jump off our shadows"; "Reality is the rough side, and Delusion the pattern side of the woven tapestry of life";—of such a quality are the better things in this book. And they are many, and make the book, when all is said and done, amply well worth the reading.

PETER O'DONOVAN

MUSIC

ALFRED CORTOT'S STUDIES IN MUSICAL INTERPRETATION. Set down by Jeanne Thieffry. Translated by Robert Jaques. (*Harrap*. 10s. 6d.). pp. 279.

"Does modern music-teaching do its utmost to penetrate the very nature of the art that it claims to expound? Does it try to discover the hidden springs of the composer's inspiration? Does it not sacrifice too much to mere instrumental dexterity, thus hampering the intelligent appreciation of feelings? Unless they serve to express more effectively the principle underlying a work of art, outward correctness and mechanical perfection are worthless." Here, in Mlle. Thieffry's excellently-written compendium of Cortot's teachings, is the chief criticism levelled against the present-day executant, and it might well be taken to heart by those of our younger musicians who play contemporary music with expert technique and good style—but fail when they come to classical and romantic music.

Superficiality and unreality in interpretation is usually due to lack of tradition. Though Cortot does not use the word, he says as much. "To interpret means to recreate within ourselves the work we are playing, and we should certainly make no attempt at interpretation unless we try to put ourselves back into the conditions under which the composition was produced." "Obviously," he says, "since the nationality, the period, the individual character of the composer, the extent of his culture, the events of his life, his environment—even his reading—influence him in his creations, a knowledge of all these things is indispensable to the interpreter who aspires to make his music live again." And a younger generation which affects to despise nineteenth-century romanticism should not touch the works of the romantic composers at all, when ignorant of their emotional and spiritual significance. One regrets the rareness to-day of Cortot's broad, liberal outlook, his tolerance of Mendelssohn as of Bach, of Chopin, as of Liszt and Ravel.

The pages on Beethoven and Chopin are probably the best, despite Cortot's doubt that the logical Latin nature is capable of plumbing the violent and rebellious emotions of Beethoven. Curiously enough, his remarks on the Preludes of his own countryman, Debussy, are somewhat less convincing, perhaps because he does not stress sufficiently the inherent nature-poetry of Debussy's impressionism, the poetry of water, trees, sun and moonlight.

There are a few slips—or, since it is Cortot, shall we call them paradoxes? Beethoven he states to have "smashed form to atoms" in his Sonata Op. 27, No. 2, a model of formal structure, even from the academic point of view. The recapitulation of Chopin's Sonata in B♭ Minor, Op. 35, he places in the middle of the development. Again, in the interpretation of the Finale of the latter sonata, Cortot directs that one hand be made more sonorous than the other. Yet Liszt played the entire movement—with the help of the *Una Corda*—*sotto voce* and *legato*, as if "night winds were sweeping over churchyard graves," and Chopin's express commendation (on Stavenhagen's testimony) proves that this was how the composer wished to have the movement played—a "poor Finale to an excellent work," according to critics ignorant of what tradition can conceal.

One may not see eye to eye with details such as these, but one must admire the deep and searching mind which is here brought to bear on the works of the masters. Mlle. Thieffry's book is to be recommended to all students of the pianoforte who take their work seriously.

TILLY FLEISCHMANN

FILM

COLOUR CINEMATOGRAPHY. Major Adrian B. Klein, M.B.E., A.R.P.S. (*Chapman and Hall, Ltd.*, demy 8vo, 362 pp., 135 ills. 25s.).

This beautifully produced work is of vital importance to the technician and film student alike. It reveals years of systematic research and methodical accumulation of facts, coupled with a genuine enthusiasm for the subject which has made it the author's life's work. That work has led him into actual contact with most processes invented for rendering of moving pictures in colour and this book is the result of his increasing awareness of the colossal waste of genius, time and money due to mutual ignorance and overlapping of workers in the same field. Accordingly, much of the book is devoted to detailed references (with numerous illustrations) to all patented processes, both American and European, with a critical analysis of the practical value of each. This alone is of great value as indicating sound lines of advance in coping with colour-fringes, parallax, light-efficiency, economy of stock, adaptability for standard projectors, etc., all vital factors affecting appeal and marketing values. All angles are covered—emulsion making, coating and grading of film, camera construction and use, filters and exposure factors, development and printing processes, and, finally, projector and screen construction and use. Of special interest to the cineaste are his concluding chapters on general theory as to lighting, colour harmony, balance of colour-masses, coloration of backgrounds, and rhythms in colour-sequences with a consequent addition to montage possibilities, though this section is intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, the author's aim being practical throughout. He is to be congratulated on his success. S. O. M.

FICTION

THE METAMORPHOSIS. By Franz Kafka. (*The Parton Press*. 3s. 6d.).

THE GAY AND MELANCHOLY FLUX. By William Saroyan. (*Faber and Faber*. 7s. 6d.).

Franz Kafka is only slightly known as yet to readers of English. Of the work which he left at his early death, only two volumes have been translated—*The Castle* and *The Great Wall of China*. But these were sufficient to proclaim Kafka as a writer of genius. *The Castle* is one of the finest achievements in modern fiction; by it alone Kafka may be said to have added, as it were, another dimension to the novel. His unique blending of actuality and phantasy, his subtle and pervasive irony, and his perception of spiritual and emotional vistas neglected by the realists, make him one of the most significant writers in modern fiction.

The Metamorphosis is a long-complete story of 74 pages, and is sufficiently typical of Kafka's work to serve as an introduction for those who have not yet become acquainted with his other books. The theme—the metamorphosis of a man into a species of vermin—and its implications are handled with extraordinary skill, and the story is reminiscent of *The Giant Mole*, that absorbing study of persecution-mania which delighted all readers of *The Great Wall of China*.

Saroyan's practice of the short story must compel the interest of every student of the *genre*. The tales in this volume, as in his previous collections, ignore all the accepted canons of the medium; they are formless, sketchy, without incident. Each of them might be more or less adequately described in these words, which occur in the story entitled *Panorama Unmerciful* . . . "this which I have written and which is not a story, since it does not follow the three rules, and which is not a poem, and not an essay, and not anything

else, only itself, precisely what it is, itself . . ." Saroyan's protean style, and these amorphous tales, are products of the unmerciful panorama of American life impinging on a romantic sensibility.

For the stories in this volume—particularly *Laura Immortal*, *The Gay and Melancholy Flux*, *Love* and *At Sundown*—proclaim Saroyan as representative of the long-overdue Romantic trend in fiction. *At Sundown* is curiously reminiscent of Francis Stuart, though it nowhere reaches the lyrical intensity of which Stuart is capable, or achieves his beauty of style. Saroyan's prose is undisciplined and often pretentious, but it has a remarkable urgency and freshness. His notation of thought-processes and their relation to action—a major problem with every serious writer—is genuinely idiosyncratic and significant. The observations and reflections which crowd his stories are apt, rather than profound or penetrating, and his work—in the final analysis—lacks balance and certainty. But when all this has been allowed, Saroyan still remains a decidedly interesting personality among modern prose-writers. His experiments with the short-story form, though often unsuccessful, are prompted by an urge to enlarge the scope of the *genre* and to free it from the limitations imposed on it by the conditions of the magazine market.—NIALL SHERIDAN

THEY LIVED IN COUNTY DOWN. By Kathleen Fitzpatrick. (*Chatto and Windus*. 6s.).

Messrs. Chatto and Windus are to be congratulated on the discernment which they display in rescuing certain specimens of literature from unmerited oblivion. All who were interested in the curiosities of late Victorian literature must have welcomed their handsome re-issue of *Delina Delaney*, by Amanda McKittrick Ros, complete with the devastating answer to Barry Pain. Such an excellent choice may have raised extravagant expectations which the latest literary exhumation—Kathleen Fitzpatrick's *They Lived in County Down*—may not altogether satisfy.

But this "book about children, for grown-ups and children" (originally published in 1905 as *The Weans of Rowallan*) has merits which justify its reappearance. It is a rambling, discursive story of the Darragh children—Fly, Patsy, Jane, Mick and Honeybird—and of their life at Rowallan; completely charming and convincing because the author writes without that condescension which makes adults so ludicrous in the eyes of children. Children should relish this book, if only because the author admits them to a world in which they are immediately at home.

N. S.

GAEL OVER GLASGOW. By Edward Shiels. (*Sheed and Ward*. 7s. 6d.).

Here is a simple tale, with enough of life, its pathos and its hopes, its materialism and its "high spots," even for the sophisticated. To those whose love is great enough to include ships and the sea—the giant "Queen Mary" becomes an animate being in the world depicted—there is added interest in this story of Glasgow, its Socialists and its hero, Brian O'Neill.

INVASION '14. By Maxence van der Meersch. (*Constable*. 8s. 6d.).

The crudities of life behind the lines in the occupied territory of Belgium and the industrial districts of north-east France form a large part of this readable war-book. The subject is novel, if one must confess the atmosphere in these distant years from (old-fashioned) war, a little wearying. The treatment is careful and authentic—a fact all the more remarkable when, from the note on the author, we learn that he was less than twelve years old when the war ended.

K. H.

(Several reviews have been held over owing to lack of space)

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THE MONTH IN RETROSPECT. (16 APRIL—15 MAY.)

PRESIDENT introduced draft of new constitution for Eire, a sovereign, independent, democratic state, to be submitted to plebiscite, and appealed for non-party consideration; Labour not enthusiastic and general criticism by Opposition; women's societies demanded deletion of certain clauses; welcomed by Catholic Press and featured in many foreign papers; President denied that new office president would lead to dictatorship or that women would be deprived of their rights; Dail passed second reading. Dublin building strike continued; settlement with some employers; employers' federation stated increase demanded would cost £500,000 a year; at strikers' demonstration official said wage all the year round was not 80s. but 55s. Strike of 3,600 Dublin clothing workers; settlement with certain firms. Arigna mines dispute ended, all men to join union. After negotiation general increase in wages in Jacob's factory. Women Workers' conference called for improved conditions and urged workers to ensure that any guild system did not lead to fascism. Deputy Davin said Labour Party did not advocate Russian system and stood for democracy now as in 1922. Dublin trade unionists held commemoration of James Connolly. At Foxford, Bishop of Achonry said: "Here in Foxford we have in truth not a workers' republic but a workers' paradise." Fr. Finlay, in message to I.A.O.S., referred to necessity for co-operative principle in industry. Coiste na bPaisti stated trade union movement was only one giving practical support to Gaelic movement. County Councils general council called on Government to consider Gaelicisation of Universities. New Government statute of National University provides for future officials having competent knowledge of Irish. Protestant Irish Guild hold regular Gaelic services in St. Patrick's Cathedral. In Dail, Minister for Agriculture claimed Gaelic migration scheme had been great success; Donegal families moved to Meath. Mary Kettle lectured to Dublin Rotary on need for women police. Dublin Justice urged legislation for borstal treatment instead of imprisonment for youths over 16. Announced at Lifeboat Annual Meeting in Dublin, that 2,518 lives had been saved in Ireland since 1850. Dr. Jos. Hannigan suggested municipal hospital of 600 beds for Dublin as of importance second only to housing. Stated at Alexandra College Union that work of hospital almoners was increasing considerably. Dublin Cancer Hospital will publish report on all cases, first of its kind in Ireland. Minister for Education set up committee to consider physical training as compulsory subject in schools. At opening of £6,000 national schools at Sandycroft, Deputy Little said family life should be centre of civilisation. 98 affiliated branches, increase of 17, reported at C.Y.M.S. convention; resolution of Labour's continental affiliation postponed. Fr. Sylvester, Irish Capuchin, appointed Archbishop of Simla. Licensed traders suggested conference with temperance bodies to consider amending legislation. Opening new houses in Enniscorthy, Minister for Local Government said housing was a great social and Christian work. In Dail, debate opposition called attention to continued high figure of unemployment. Official figures showed net loss of population in 1936 as 8,000; number of unemployment register showed decrease at end of 1936; increase in agricultural employment since 1931 was over 4,000. National War Memorial committee in report on Islandbridge site paid tribute to generosity of Saorstát Governments. Government attended Requiem Mass and commemoration of 1916 leaders at Arbour Hill. Plaques erected to memory of The O'Rahilly and Thomas Weafer where killed in action in 1916.

General improvement in rate collection. Dublin rates fixed at 17s. 6d., increase of 1s. Waterford Corporation dissolved and duties taken over by Government Commissioner. Price of bread reduced by Government order. 104,000 radio licences issued in Saorstát during year. Saorstát adverse balance for March was £1,802,000, highest since October. Government considering general question of game preservation. Minister denied charge that new Bacon Bill was imposed by the large curers. Dr. W. E. Thrift appointed by Government Provost of Trinity College, succeeding Dr. E. J. Gwynn, resigned. Successful R.D.S. Spring Show. Protests in Northern Parliament against ministers' salaries, a member commenting: "No one gets too old here"; Prime Minister refused to merge ministries. Military tribunal sentence to imprisonment three Mayo men on charge of riotous assembly on occasion of prohibited 1916 commemoration. Belfast detective charged with manslaughter following shooting of British army absentee. Reprieve for young Dublin man under sentence of death for murder of sweetheart. Wexford youth charged with simulating ghost. Builder awarded decree for removing roof to lay ghost. Prisoner on smuggling charge in Leitrim dashed from court, swam Shannon and escaped across border.

Minister for Industry stated 800 new factories and workshops had been established since 1932, including 50 large factories last year; there were 78,000 workers in protected industries. New tannery for annual production of £170,000 worth of greasy leather opened at Gorey. Tannery employing 100 men opened in Dungarvan. Fireclays factory in rural surroundings opened at The Swan. First industrial alcohol factories opened. Killarney high-grade footwear factory closed through lack of supplies. Bray electric lamp factory

THE MONTH IN RETROSPECT (continued)

suspended production because of importation of low-priced foreign lamps. Protesting against importation of cheap foreign goods, Industrial Development Association stated Japanese weavers were paid 4s. 8d. a week and Irish weavers 35s. Minister for Finance stated cattle slump in 1932-34 was due not so much to Anglo-Irish dispute as to decline in British purchasing power. Sea Fisheries Association showed increased membership and funds. In 1936 Saorstát invested almost £4,000,000 in life assurance, increase of £39,000, £617,000 being in Irish and £3,365,000 in foreign companies. Tests carried out by Research Council showed peat suitable for steam and other industrial purposes. Fortnightly liner service between New York and Dublin established.

New play by Lennox Robinson, "Killycreggis in Twilight," produced at Abbey. First production by Longford Company at Gate of "The Uncrowned King," by V. A. Pearn and Brinsley MacNamara. Galway school companies won two first prizes at Gaelic Drama Festival in Dublin. Adjudicating at Feis Maitiu, John Fernold said he had never seen in England a company as good as the Father Mathew Players, the winners. Amongst exhibitions were those of the R.H.A., Eva and Letitia Hamilton, Charles Lamb, Moyra Barry, the Academy of Irish Art, and the Photographic Society. Many entries for Feis Ceoil in Dublin, but few men in instrumental sections. Piano recital by Rosamund Jacob at Gate. Successful feiseanna at Wexford and Athlone. Pattern at Rahan on 13th centenary of St. Carthage. New Gaelic park opened in Longford. Further bird sanctuary to be established by Land Commission on west coast. Bird Protection Society urged prevention of discharge from new oil refinery in Dublin. Amongst lectures were those by Olive Purser on Greece, and Mrs. Foster Coates on Drama and Women, to the Federation of University Women; Michael Sadlier on the "Dublin University Magazine," to the Bibliographical Society; Sean T. O'Kelly on "Before and After 1916"; Dr. Eithne Byrne on Checko-Slovakia to the Women's Graduates Association; Professor B. F. Shields to Industries Federation, on University Commercial Education; Count Plunkett on Polish Art to the Academy of Christian Art; Arnold Lunn on "A Catholic in the Modern World" for An Rioghacht; Fr. Henry Gabana, Barcelona priest prohibited from lecturing in Great Britain, on the Spanish Civil War. Professor R. A. Milliken delivered the Joly memorial Lectures in T.C.D. In lecture to Illuminating Society, Eugene O'Reilly referred to Philip Sheridan, of Dublin, who achieved world fame in theatrical lighting.

Coronation of George VI celebrated in Northern Ireland; extensive cutting of wires; Belfast factory girls dismissed because they removed emblems placed on their machines; Catholic employees driven by mob from Belfast mills; the part of village of Pettigo, in Northern Ireland, decorated; Saorstát represented at Coronation by High Commissioner; no celebrations in Saorstát; Protestant General Synod expressed loyalty to George VI; clashes with police followed prohibition of Dublin meeting "to repudiate the Coronation of an English king as King of Ireland"; statue of George II in St. Stephen's Green dynamited by unknown persons; reported that "at a friendly conference" between film renters and certain organisations it was agreed that short scenes of the Coronation would be shown in Dublin cinemas. Deputy Ryan again denied in Dáil that any Anglo-Irish agreement had been made in Ottawa. Government introduced bill to abolish office of Governor-General and merge functions of Crown in Executive Council. Deputy MacEntee said: "We were Ministers of the King until December last." Discussion of the new Constitution, of a "friendly and neighbouring country," ruled out of order in Northern Parliament. Lord Craigavon stated: "I honestly believe the man is not yet born who could govern the whole of Ireland if North and South by some miracle did come together. We are separate countries to-day." Resolution of Government deputy that Constitution be postponed and that special department be set up to advance unification not accepted. Saorstát not represented at Imperial Conference in London. Prime Minister of Victoria paid call on President. President replying to protest in Dáil, said the statement of Minister to Berlin that Reich and Hitler had many admirers among Irish youth was not more than courtesy and no action would be taken. Reported that Irish Brigade with Spanish Insurgents having completed period of service and being weakened by casualties and disease, will return home. Questions in Commons on employment of Irish in Great Britain. Comment by Anglican Bishop of Liverpool on Irish immigration, replied to by Catholic Archbishop and Luke Hogan, leader of Labour Party, who said: "What wisdom they showed 100 years ago so that their great-grandchildren might have the dole." Saorstát army equitation team win a first prize at Paris Horse Show.

Died: Mrs. Catherine Daly, Limerick, mother of Edward Daly, and mother-in-law of Thomas Clarke, executed 1916 leaders. William McGavock, Glenarm nationalist. H. C. Burgess, former General Manager, L.M.S. Railways. Canon Dempsey, P.P., litterateur and art collector. Thomas O'Kelly, 1916 Volunteer. Herbert Hughes, composer and folk song collector. Michael Carolan, former I.R.A. Director of Intelligence. T. P. O'Donoghue, well-known Kenmare journalist. Patrick O'Sullivan, education art inspector.

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